

A GRADUATE COACH

T. TRUXTUN HARE





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Book

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A Graduate Coach

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CHAPTER I

OFF TO THE WOODS

"WHEN do you leave?"

"Next week. Will you come?"

"I can't, Bob." Trelawney's tone was regretful, and he mopped his brow with his handkerchief. "I'd give a good deal to get out of this heat, but I am not my own master. No vacation for me this summer!"

Bob Walters looked round the office. Through the open door he could see the hurrying messengers incidental to a big stock broker's office, and realized the force of Trelawney's remark.

"You see, Bob," the latter continued, "I've been here only six weeks. It was a big chance to get in with this firm, and I can't go to the

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boss now and tell him I want to go camping for three weeks. It wouldn't do!"

"No, I suppose not. I'm mighty sorry, though. I had rather counted on you."

"Who is going with you?"

"Macklin, Benson and Foster."

"Oh, I see; duty before pleasure. A preliminary training trip."

"That's about it. I was going camping anyway, and thought I'd get the others in condition at the same time. Benson and Foster are both after your old place at left guard, and I want to try them out. I asked Captain Macklin so we could lay out the plans for the season."

"Make 'em sweat, Bob," said Trelawney, with a grin, as he got down from the desk where he had been sitting. "Well, I must get back to work. Good luck to you ——"

"So long, Trel. I suppose I'll see you on the eighteenth?"

"Sure. I'll be there for the opening of college. You can bet on that."

Bob hurried along the street as fast as the broiling weather conditions permitted. He

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had many things to buy in the short time left at his disposal.

His determination to take his three friends with him was of recent birth, and he had promised to superintend the matter of camping outfits. His own was not large enough for such a party.

The dark coolness of the outfitter's was grateful and with an attentive clerk before him he settled himself in a chair, catalogue in hand, and stated his wants. An hour of pure pleasure followed. To the lover of the woods, there is no delight equal to that of selecting the flies, leaders, lines and the countless other necessities which he who leaves civilization behind must equip himself with. Pots and pans Bob selected with care. Here weight was an important factor, for it is only the tyro who ladens his muscles with an ounce more than absolutely necessary.

At length the pleasant task was completed, and Bob strode homeward, the heat of the day forgotten in the cool odor of the forest which to his eager imagination seemed already to surround him.

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Four days later he stood waiting for his friends at the station in New York.

The Montreal Express purred on the track at his back. An appreciative porter surrounded by luggage waited at his side. Bob kept one eye on the clock while the other roved anxiously up and down the platform. His face brightened a hundred times as an apparently familiar figure came in sight, and a hundred times dulled to despondency as on near approach the figure lost its resemblance.

"Time's nearly up, sah," said the porter at last. "Shall I go aboard?"

"Yes. Put the things in my section. Car B. Sections eight and ten," said Bob, referring to his tickets. "I'll meet you there."

He turned to watch the porter struggling down the platform with the bags.

"Hello, Bob, here we are!" the voice he had been waiting for rang in his ears, and he turned to greet the beaming countenance of Macklin.

"Hello, Mack. You are none too soon. Where are the others?"

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"Coming along. Our taxi threw a fit coming down Forty-second Street, and we had to make a change. They are paying off the vulture now."

"Here they come. Get a wiggle on you, Benson," called Bob, and after a hurried greeting the four pushed through the gate.

The porter standing faithful guard over Bob's luggage was sent away smiling with a generous tip, and as the train pulled out the four settled themselves back to enjoy their trip from the start.

"Well, what are your plans, Bob?" asked Macklin, as the train cleared the last tunnel and settled into its stride for the long run up the Hudson. "Going to show us some sport?"

"Work, principally," returned Bob. "This trip isn't going to be child's play. I intend to get you into condition."

"Where are we going, exactly?"

"I'll tell you. We reach Montreal in the morning. We have five hours before the other train leaves, and I'm going to lay in our supply of food. I have the list here, and

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we can have it shipped with us. We reach St. Pierre at six. Spend the evening making up our packs. Get into our camp clothes the next morning, leaving our other things at the hotel. Load the canoes on the wagon. Drive fifteen miles, over the most villainous road you ever saw, to the river. Sleep in a hunter's cabin that night, and the next morning we're off! How does that sound?"

"Fine!" the answer came simultaneously from his eager hearers. "What next?"

"Well, we paddle down the river about five miles, and then comes the real work—a half-mile carry."

"That won't be so hard," said Foster.

"Won't it?" Bob smiled. He remembered his eagerness when he was a novice to the fatigue of the headstrap.

"You see," he went on, "we will have two canoes. One man to each, and two packs. Now as all our food, cooking kit, clothes, and tents have to go in those packs, they will weigh pretty close to a hundred pounds apiece. Macklin has been introduced to the job already, but you two will find it mighty

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hard work the first few days, and you won't find it easy at any time. In fact, after three weeks' wrestling with a pack you'll think anything Essex can send against you easy."

The others laughed.

"What do the canoes weigh?" asked Foster.

"About sixty pounds, dry. But when they get wet and have the rifles tied in them it will be nearer eighty."

"Phew!" This from Benson.

"Oh, it's not so bad," said Bob. "It is hard work, of course, but it will put us all in fine trim, and the fun of the life more than makes up for the work. You'll like it." He stood up and yawned. "Who's for bed? It's eleven now, and we get in at six thirty. We may as well get some sleep."

The next morning, after a hurried breakfast in the station, Bob completed his arrangements, and in his anxiety to make sure of their arrival on time, followed the provisions to the train and saw them safely put aboard.

Their route that afternoon lay through

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rolling country. The hills stretched to the horizon on each side of the track, covered with a thick growth of spruce and hemlock, their dark green lightened here and there by tracts of hardwood and the silvery gleam of birch.

The villages nestled close to the railroad. Collections of white frame cottages surrounding the inevitable church and running off on the outskirts to greet the green fingers of the forests which stretched menacingly toward the huddled houses, as if to reclaim the lush pastures which the hardy habitant had wrested from their grasp.

From time to time the train stopped at some small station, and fat, comfortable-looking peasant women, some with white aprons and caps, would fill their car, only to descend again a few miles further on. Brawny farmers, dressed in their best homespun, filled the smoking-car, and their queer patois amused the ears of the three travelers whose knowledge of French had been confined to university class rooms. Bob, from his greater knowledge of the language and his previous experience with the French-Canadian, was

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not so much at a loss, but even he had difficulties in following when a gentle-faced priest endeavored to draw him into conversation.

At length the new sights had begun to pall, and Bob glanced out of the window.

"Nearly there now, fellows," he exclaimed with a note of excitement in his voice. "The next station is ours."

"Good!" said Macklin with a breath of satisfaction. "My legs are beginning to get cramped."

Leaving the others to collect the hand-baggage, Bob went forward to the baggage-car to superintend the unloading of the heavier pieces. A shrill whistle from the engine greeted him as he entered, and before he had pointed out the various articles to the baggage-man he felt the train slacken its speed.

First a house, here and there, came to view, then a wide, muddy road, peopled by two dogs and a chicken; then more houses, with a pretty girl leaning over one fence waving her hand; then simultaneously with the grinding of brakes, the platform and a diminutive station.

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Bob jumped down as the train halted and lent a hand with the bundles.

The platform was crowded with the usual gathering of villagers, to whom the arrival of the one train daily was an event of supreme importance.

Macklin and the others pushed their way to a bench and stood guard over their possessions, the crowd staring at them.

"Lend me a hand, Mack," called Bob. "We want to get these things over to the hotel at once."

There was no wagon in sight, so the four loaded themselves with as much as they could, impressed a couple of youths into their service to look after the remainder, and trudged up the street to where the little white hotel swung its gaudy sign—"Hotel St. Pierre."

"Ah, Monsieur Walters, bonne chance," exclaimed a ruddy, corpulent little man who rose at their approach from his seat in front of the door, and after shaking hands vigorously with Bob helped him to deposit his burdens in the hall.

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Then, having been introduced to Bob's friends, he led the way up-stairs chatting vigorously all the time.

"These will do very nicely, Monsieur Duval," said Bob as he looked round the rooms provided. "When can we have supper?"

"The supper? When you will?" Their host consulted his watch. "It lacks a quarter-hour of six. Six o'clock?"

"First rate. Give us a lot to eat. We are as hungry as bears."

A quick scrub removed some of the marks of travel and when Duval called up the stairs they were ready.

"I hope you have kept my canoes in good shape?" remarked Bob to Duval, after his first hunger was appeased and he could find time to talk.

"But, yes. When I received your letter, I told Jean to take them down to the river. They have been in the water now for three, four days. I think monsieur will find them in good condition."

"And the teams for to-morrow?"

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"Ready, monsieur. Jean himself will drive you. And Pierre will conduct the canoes."

"Good!" declared Bob rising from his seat. "Let's go down and take a look at the canoes."

The four strolled down the street of the little village, turned sharply to the right and descended a steep incline.

At the foot lay a small river, curving through the pasture-land to lose itself eventually in a cleft between two low-lying hills. In the other direction it broadened out into a large pond, some thirty acres in extent. On the further shore, close to where the river roared down a rapid, stood a sawmill. It had stopped for the day, but the huge pile of fresh sawdust indicated that it had not long been idle.

A long boom of logs ran out at right angles to the shore, supported by a group of piling at its further end. The surface of the water within the boom was a close carpet of logs, heaving slowly up and down on the unquiet river.

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"That is rather small lumber, isn't it?" remarked Benson, whose imagination, fed by stories of lumber camps, had expected to see logs spanning three feet.

"Not for this country," returned Bob. "Those logs will run eight to twelve inches at the butt. It's only spruce and hemlock, of course. All the pine was cut from this country years ago. Even spruce is getting scarce. Where we are going you will find mostly hardwoods—maples, you know—and birches—lots of hemlock and spruce of course mixed in it, but very few forests of the latter. Hello there, Jean." Bob hurried down toward a figure standing at the water's edge, examining two canoes on the bank.

"Eh, Jean!" he called.

The man, a tall, sinewy French-Canadian, greeted him with a smile. "Ah, Monsieur Bob! I am glad to see you."

"How are you, Jean; well?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"And Rose-Marie? And little Jean?"

"Yes, monsieur. Thank the good Lord."

"How are the canoes?"

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"All right, monsieur. This one has a small leak. I was about to mend it." And he turned again to his task.

The two canoes, of birch bark, lay side by side on the bank. Fourteen feet in length, broad in the beam, they nevertheless looked like frail craft in which to trust oneself to the wilderness.

All four watched Jean at his work with interest. The canoe, turned bottom up, showed the rough seams where the bark had been sewed and resined.

Near the bow, they could see where a bit of the resin had been knocked off. Jean started a small fire and put the gum pot on to melt. Then with a piece of flaming birch bark, he melted the gum already in place and thoroughly dried the seam. Finally he poured a portion of the gum into the crack, moulded it with his fingers as it hardened, and declared the job complete.

"How is that gum?" asked Bob, testing it with his finger.

"Good, monsieur. The hot sun will just soften it."

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"Not too hard, is it? The water will be cold."

"No, monsieur. Just right."

"You see," explained Bob turning to the others, "this stuff is made of resin and wax. If you get it too soft the heat of the sun will melt it, and if too hard the cold water renders it brittle and it will knock off. In either case you spring a leak."

"What do you do then?"

"Paddle ashore, light your fire, and mend her just as you saw Jean do. It's very simple."

"What time will you be starting, monsieur?" asked Jean.

"About nine, I think. That will give us lots of time, won't it?"

"Oh, yes. Good-night, monsieur."

They strolled slowly back to the hotel, and after talking a while with the proprietor, Bob made the move to go up.

"I'm just about ready for bed myself," admitted Foster, preparing to follow.

"No bed yet a while, Foster!" declared Bob. "We have to go over all our duffle to-night—make up our minds what we can leave

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behind and then rig up our packs. We won't have time in the morning."

"Will it take long?" asked Macklin.

"Oh, a couple of hours."

"Phew!" said Foster.

CHAPTER II

MAKING THE PACKS

THEY found all their luggage piled in their rooms and under Bob's directions started to unpack. The lid of the provision box was pried off and Bob arranged its contents in orderly array along the floor.

"Hand me that bundle, will you, Tom?" he said, pointing to one he had taken out of his valise. The bundle, undone, proved to contain a number of water-proof bags of various sizes.

"What are those for?" asked Benson.

"To put the food in. You see they are waterproof, and easily carried. Great things. Hand me the flour bag."

Bob filled two of his bags with flour. "There we are. Ten pounds in each. One for each pack. Next!"

The work of filling the bags went rapidly on. Corn-meal, dried apples, macaroni—each was put in its own bag, until the array of paper

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bags and tin cans had been replaced by two rows of neat white bags ready for the packs.

"Check these things off this list, fellows, as I call them," said Bob at last as he rose from the floor.

"Flour, twenty pounds."

"Here," said Benson, indicating the bags.

"Corn-meal, ten pounds."

"Here."

"You had better move each bag across the room as I call it," said Bob. "Macaroni, two pounds."

"Here."

"Coffee."

"Here."

"Tea."

Bob continued until every article was accounted for. Then he turned his attention to the personal kit.

"What have you brought, Tom?" he asked, turning to Benson. "I want you all to remember one thing before we go into this. Everything goes into two common packs, so we must each take about the same. That's only fair."

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The others nodded agreement.

"All right, then. I have had the most experience, so I'll suggest what I think you should each take."

"Fire ahead."

"One extra shirt. One extra set underclothes. Two pairs of socks. Tooth-brush. Comb, etc. Camp slippers."

"How about a coat?" asked Foster.

"Take it if you want to. But you'll have to carry it yourself. I'm going to take only a sweater."

"All right, Bob, you're the boss," agreed Foster looking regretfully at the pile of clothing he had brought with him. "It seems awful slim rations to me, but I'll stand by you."

"You'll be glad enough before you've walked half a mile," said Bob. "Now if you two will agree to turn out when I call you, I'll let you go to bed. But it will leave us a lot to do in the morning."

"I am sleepy—that's a fact," announced Benson. "I think I'll take your advice. Knock loud in the morning. I'm a heavy sleeper."

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"You look in pretty good shape, Frank," said Bob as he and Macklin slowly undressed when the others had left the room. "What have you been doing this summer?"

"I loafed for a couple of weeks after college closed, and then I fooled round a bit with a football and played tennis. I can't afford to get fat. It takes me too long to get down again."

"I wish Foster shared your sentiments," said Bob reflectively as he sat on the side of the bed unlacing his shoes. "He looks hog-fat to me."

"He is a bit heavy," agreed Macklin. "But this trip ought to take it off him."

"That's why he is here," said Bob tersely. "Trelawney's place at left guard isn't going to be easy to fill."

"I think Foster's the man."

"How about Benson?"

"Too light. You remember how Kingston pushed him all over the field last year?"

"Yes. But he has grit. He fights for all he is worth. I'm not sure about Foster."

"Oh, I see," said Macklin slowly. "A

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light breaks upon me. Then this trip is not only a trip to get us in shape but a scheme to try out the spirit of those two ! ”

He looked at Bob, who nodded assent.

“ Great idea. But Benson’s too light anyway, in my opinion, even if he is made of the better stuff.”

“ I have a theory he’ll train up on this trip. Last year he was in poor shape when he reported, and the strain of the season brought his weight way down. If I can put ten pounds on him before we return I think he’ll hold it.”

“ Well,” said Macklin, as he tumbled into bed, “ my judgment is against it.”

Bob paused in the act of blowing out the light, and turned to his companion.

“ See here, Mack,” he said. “ You’re captain of the ’Varsity, all right. I understand that. But I’m coach. If we’re to get on together, you must stop using your judgment until you have some facts to base it on.”

Macklin grinned from his pillows. “ Same old Bob. Don’t worry. I guess we’ll get on all right.”

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At six the next morning Bob opened a sleepy eye in response to a knock on the door, and with many a groan got slowly out of bed.

Macklin snored on peacefully.

Bob regarded him for a moment, then took pity on the sleeper, and went to awaken the others first.

"Rat-a-tat-tat!" He beat furiously with both fists upon their door and then entered unceremoniously.

"Turn out!" he called. "Time to get up!"

"G-r-r-r-h!"

"Hi, Tom! Wake up."

"Wha-what's the matter?"

"Get up."

"All right."

Benson stretched, rolled over on his other side and went to sleep again.

Bob poked him in the ribs.

"All right—what's the hurry? I'm getting up!"

"A lot you are," commented Bob, and seizing the covers in a ruthless hand he swept them off the bed.

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"Wow! That's the deuce of a trick," complained Benson, still half asleep. He rubbed his knuckles in his eyes and stared bewilderedly around him. "Hel-lo! is that you, Bob? Time to get up?"

"Time to get up!" repeated Bob sarcastically, "when I've been bellowing in your ears for five minutes."

"Sorry," said Benson swinging his legs over the edge of his mattress. "Is Joe awake yet?"

"Not a quiver!" replied Bob, looking across at Foster's recumbent figure wrapped in the bedclothes like a caterpillar in its chrysalis.

"This'll do the job." Benson leaned down and picked up a slipper, which with true aim he slammed at his roommate. It caught the latter on the ear and brought him out of bed all standing—a howl on his lips.

"Confound you, Tom." The slipper whizzed back, but Benson was on the alert and dodged it neatly.

"Stop your fooling now, and get dressed," commanded Bob. "Breakfast in fifteen minutes," he warned.

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On his return to his own room he found Macklin struggling into his clothes.

"Others up?"

"Just. Nice to get into these clothes again?"

"You bet," said Macklin with enthusiasm as he pulled on his boots. "Nothing like it."

The coach and captain had already disposed of two eggs apiece when the others appeared, very conscious of the patently new effect they presented from flannel shirt to shoe-packs.¹

"Tenderfeet, that's certain," remarked Macklin cruelly. "I see that we'll have to give you extra work to get the gloss off those trousers."

"I forgot to tell you, Foster," remarked Bob, "that a cravat is one of the things we usually dispense with in the woods."

Foster's hand stole guiltily to his neck, where a modest blue tie gave what he considered the finishing touch to his costume.

"If you feel undressed without it," continued Bob, banteringly, "tie a handkerchief

¹ "Shoe-packs"—high moccasins.

MAKING THE PACKS

round your neck. It's quite as ornamental and much more useful."

Foster laughed consciously, but it was noticeable that the blue tie was missing shortly after breakfast.

"Now," said Bob drawing a long breath, when they had all assembled in his room, "I am going to make up the packs. Watch close, because you can get more pure misery out of a badly-made pack than anything I know. And one of us will have to do this every morning. Hand me that rubber blanket."

He divided the bags of food into two parts of equal weight.

"We want to get the packs as nearly equal as we can," he said, and leaning over spread the rubber blanket on the floor.

"You see I lay this leather thong six inches from each end. That's for the 'pucker string.' Turn the edges over. Now two pairs of blankets. I use this rope for the pucker string. Now the food. Pile it evenly. Have you got your personal duffle-bag ready?" he asked Benson.

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"No."

"Get a move on, then. Hand me Mack's and mine. There! On second thoughts I'll add the rest of the flour to this pack. That will just balance the tents. Now roll the blankets up just as tight as you can get them. Take a pull on that pucker string, Frank—the inside one. Yes, that's right. Just as tight as you can—good. Take a half hitch and pass the end to me."

Bob swiftly passed the rope round the pack and made it fast.

"Now the same thing for the rubber blanket."

He rolled the pack over, caught up the end of the thong—pulled on it, and when he had the ends of the pack as closely drawn as possible, passed two of the loose ends round the middle.

"You see these two loose ends?" He held them up. "These buckle on the headstrap. Throw it over here."

He buckled the broad piece of leather to the ends of the thongs and stood up.

"Swing her up, Mack," he said. Macklin

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seized the thongs close to the pack and giving a half turn, slung it dexterously to his back and adjusted the headstrap across his forehead.

"How does she feel?"

"All right. Hung a bit too high for me, though."

"Put her down. That's the advantage of these buckles," remarked Bob, as he let the strap out a hole. "The tump-line used to be made all in one piece and you had to undo the pack to adjust it. Now try her."

"All right." Macklin took a couple of turns up and down the room, while the two novices looked on eagerly.

"Let me try her," said Foster.

"Sure!" Macklin dropped the pack with a jar.

Foster stood over it in the attitude he had seen Macklin assume, and boldly tried to swing it up. He had not caught the knack of it, however, and the edge of the pack caught on his hip. He struggled with it, but the weight was too great to lift from the strained position he was in and he had to let go.

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"You can't make it in two heaves, Joe," said Bob smiling. "A heavy pack like that must be swung straight from the ground to your back in one motion. Try again."

This time Foster was successful. "It's not so heavy when you get it up," he remarked as he duplicated Macklin's promenade.

"It never is for the first hundred yards," remarked Macklin dispassionately. "But the second hundred! Oh, my!"

Bob allowed the others to make up the second pack under his supervision. They took some time at it, but finally completed it to their satisfaction.

"Now for the cooking outfit," remarked Bob, reaching for a small brown canvas haversack.

"By Jove, we forgot all about it!" exclaimed Foster.

"No, indeed. It always goes in a pack by itself. Easier to get at and keeps the other things cleaner. We can take turns balancing it on top of the other pack."

"What does it weigh?"

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"Oh, about twelve pounds. It's not much," said Bob, working away. "Now that's finished. There are the rods. Four of them. I got you all the flies and leaders you'll want."

"How about rifles? Shall we all take them?"

"I say not. Two will be plenty. I'll carry this .22 pistol. It will come in handy for partridges."

Bob looked round the room to see if he had forgotten anything.

"Who'll carry the axes?" he asked.

"I'll take one," said Macklin and Benson in the same breath.

"Well, that about completes the list. Let's get started."

They shouldered the packs and tramped down the stairs, where Jean met them.

"All ready, monsieur?" he asked.

"Yes, Jean. Canoes loaded?"

"Yes. Pierre is waiting only for your pack-tons to start."

Outside they found the canoes loaded on a wagon, well tied down with rope, and Pierre perched in front. The packs were lifted in,

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and with an "Allons" from the driver the wagon creaked on its way.

"Au revoir, Monsieur Duval," called Bob as he climbed up beside Jean on the front seat of an ancient looking buckboard.

"Au revoir, monsieur. Bonne chance," replied the little host, and with a final wave of the hand he watched the party till a bend in the road hid them.

"We're off," said Bob with a sigh of satisfaction, and settled into his seat.

CHAPTER III

THE CARRY

BUMPITY-BUMP-BUMP !

"Is this what you call a road in this country?" remarked Foster as he bounced up and down on the back seat.

"Sure! This is a turnpike. Wait till the last few miles if you want to see a mere road."

Their way had led for some miles through the bottom-lands dotted here and there with houses. The road was rarely level, and their progress had consisted chiefly of swift flight down an incline, a rattle across a few yards of flat, a small bridge and a gradually slackening dash up the opposing slope, when, the top reached, their pace slowed to an ambling walk.

"Why do you always gallop down-hill, Jean?" asked Macklin after he had observed the process for the tenth time and for an

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equal number of times saved himself from falling out backward.

"It is easier, monsieur, for the horse to take the hill. We all drive this way in this country, monsieur."

"It may be easier on the horse," remarked Foster, aside, "but it's hard on the nerves."

"First cousin to shooting the chutes, I call it," declared Benson.

"There's not much danger of any of you falling out," remarked Bob sarcastically as he looked back at the grumblers. "You're so fat that you are wedged into that seat for keeps. We will have to pry you out at the end of the journey."

"*Va donc!*"¹ called Jean. "*Va donc, Estelle,*" and in the swift descent that followed all chance of repartee was lost.

The character of the country began to change. The wide expanse of pastures gave way to mere clearings, and in turn the latter surrendered to the unbroken forest.

"That's the last bit of civilization on any

¹ "*Va donc*"—"Go on," or "get up."

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extended scale from here to Hudson's Bay," remarked Bob as the tree trunks closed around them. "The forest is unbroken now till it runs out in the Land of Little Sticks."

At noon they stopped for a bite of cold lunch thoughtfully provided by Monsieur Duval. They were in no hurry. The better part of the drive was behind them and the canoe team was far in the rear. "We'll give it a chance to catch up," said Bob as he stretched himself under a tree.

After a wait of an hour they heard the creaking of the canoes in the distance, and hailed Pierre joyfully as he came into view through the low-hanging branches, still crouched between the prows of his charges, but busily engaged on a piece of bread and cold salt pork.

"How goes it, Pierre?"

"Mal. Bien de misé. Much trouble. I get stuck back a little scuse."¹

"Have some lunch."

"I have 'eet," he replied smiling, and held up his pork. "Va donc," and to the accom-

¹ Scuse—French-Canadian term for a short journey.

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paniment of much creaking he got under way again.

When the last sound had died away, Bob got slowly to his feet.

"We'd better be off. Come along, fellows."

The road by imperceptible degrees dropped into the valley. The horse was walking, for just ahead was Pierre with the canoes, and the road permitted of no passing without much difficulty.

To the pair of novices on the back seat each moment was of interest, and except for the frequent jolts as the wheels went over a protruding root their progress was peaceful. The gay chatter of the morning hours had been replaced by a drowsy silence and the hush of the woods enveloped them. At length they heard a shout from Pierre in advance and a few moments later drove out on a level sward. In the center of the clearing stood a small log cabin. A few yards from its door flowed a broad stream with precipitous cliffs rising from the further bank. But everywhere were trees. Leaning singly in perilous fashion from the edge of the

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rocks or grouped in heavy masses along the river bottom, wherever the eye rested it was soothed by a tint of green, reflected even from the placid surface of the river itself.

The next half hour was a busy one. The canoes were unloaded and placed in the water to test for the leaks which would inevitably appear after the severe jolting to which they had been subjected.

Pierre attacked a balsam tree and gave Foster a practical lesson in axe work, and in stripping the branches for the material for a bed.

"We won't need much of that, Pierre," called Bob; "the bunks are half full now. We won't pitch the tents to-night."

He was engaged in unpacking the provisions, while Jean rapidly cut some wood for the fire. Soon a blaze was crackling in the improvised fireplace near the river, and while waiting for it to burn down to the proper size for cooking, Bob suggested a swim.

"Come on, Tom!" he called as he shed his clothes. "This is the last chance you'll have for a bath for some time."

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"How's that? I thought we would camp on water every night."

"We will, but I have generally been too tired or cold to take advantage of it."

"Oh, but it is so refreshing. I'll go in every day. If not in the evening, then in the morning. I wouldn't feel comfortable without my bath."

"There is no law against it," remarked Bob cheerfully. "And your desire for cleanliness is most commendable; but we'll see!" with which prophetic remark he waded carefully into the water.

The others followed, and soon the river foamed with their antics.

"Great! Isn't it?" sputtered Macklin as he came to the surface after a dive.

"Fine. Takes the stiffness out of your bones," agreed Bob who, lying placidly on his back, was allowing the river to carry him slowly down.

Pierre and Jean watched them from the bank with amusement largely tinged with amazement. Their skins shivered at the idea of the cold water.

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Bob dried himself vigorously, and, dressed once more, turned his attention to supper.

The fire had burned down to a bed of hot coals and it was but a matter of a few seconds before the appetizing odor of bacon caused the others to hurry with their toilets.

The hearty meal put new life in them all and made them at peace with the world.

Jean took the gum pot when supper was over, and devoted the remaining hours of daylight to making the canoes once more water-tight. Then after another hour in front of a blazing fire they turned into their blankets.

"Tom, you'll take bow in my canoe, and Joe in Mack's," announced Bob the next morning after a consultation. "We'll balance better that way."

Everything was in readiness, the packs stowed amidships, the rifles and rods tied along the gunwales. Foster and Benson took their places and pushing off Walters and Macklin stepped in the stern of their respective canoes.

"Bonne chance," called Pierre and Jean

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from the bank and with a twist of his paddle Bob drove the canoe out into the current.

"How goes it?" he asked Benson after a few moments' silent paddling.

"All right."

"Got the pads under your knees?"

"Yes. Very comfortable."

"Take it easy at first. We have lots of time. We won't go far to-day. Just take an easy swing of your paddle. Keep the same time as much as possible; otherwise it is harder work for me."

The two canoes were side by side, and Bob watched with interest the work of the paddlers. Macklin was a fair canoeist; Foster was a total novice, but Bob was pleased to see that he handled his paddle without clumsiness, though not with the ease displayed by his own bowman.

They paddled down the river for about five miles, and then Bob drove his canoe toward shore.

"Here's the first carry," he called to Macklin who followed his lead.

As Bob swung his canoe sideways to a log

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that lay half in the water, Tom made a motion as if to rise.

"Sit still!" commanded Bob sharply. "Sternman gets out first, whenever possible," and steadying the canoe he stepped carefully out on the log.

"Now, Tom!" and Benson hastened to obey. The pack came next, and was carried up on high ground. Then the canoe was carefully lifted out and the whole process repeated with the other one.

Bob slipped the paddles through thongs on the thwarts, in such a way that the blades rested on the center thwart, the handles at the bow. He rapidly strapped to each blade the small pads Benson had knelt on, and straightened out the headstrap which was already made fast to the thwart.

Macklin finished rigging his canoe at the same time and they stood waiting.

"Well," said Bob, "who wants a canoe and who a pack? I would suggest," he went on, "that you two novices try the packs at first. The canoes take a little more handling."

"All right." Tom moved toward one of

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the packs, and hefted it critically. "All ready?" He seized the pack and swung it heavily to his back, and stood staring up at his companions from under his bowed head.

"Start ahead with it, Tom," called Bob. "You can't miss the trail."

Foster meanwhile had swung up one pack and was vainly endeavoring to get the cooking pack on top of it without overbalancing.

"Here, let me give you a hand," said Macklin. "Now you're off," he added as Foster assumed the load—"straight ahead."

Macklin and Bob put up the canoes and walked after them.

"I'm going ahead fast, Mack," the latter said, his voice coming hollowly from under the canoe. "Five minutes' walk ought to be enough for the first scuse."

He walked ahead as rapidly as his burden would permit, and soon caught up with the pack-bearers—stumbling along under their unaccustomed loads.

Foster found carrying a pack very far from pure pleasure. For fifty yards the load felt light. Then for a hundred it felt heavy.



**"I CAN'T MAKE IT ANY
FURTHER"**

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Then the muscles in his neck began to ache. He supported the pack with his hands, but the neck still ached. Ached worse. For a hundred yards more he staggered along.

"I can't make it any further. I must rest." His pride came to his help for a few minutes, but the shooting pains in his neck became too much for him. He felt that he had to stop. Just then Bob passed him. The latter saw the expression on Foster's face and took pity on him. Fifty yards further he stopped, rested the bow of his canoe in the crotch of a tree and stepped from under it. This welcome halt put new life into Foster and, gritting his teeth, he brought his pack to where Bob sat, and dropped it with a gasp of relief.

"Jove, it feels good to get rid of that." He sank exhausted on the ground. The sweat was pouring off him.

Benson came up a moment later in little better plight. Macklin himself had to mop his brow, and could not refrain from a long breath when he had safely lodged his canoe against a tree.

"Well," said Bob with a twinkle in his eye

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to Foster, who lay on the ground stretched out at full length, "how do you like packing?"

"No mistake that it is hard work," acknowledged Foster. "How much further is it?"

"About a quarter of a mile. We didn't come quite half-way."

"Phew!"

"Well, have you rested enough?" asked Bob a moment later. "We ought to be getting on."

With a groan Foster got to his feet, slung up his pack and waited for the other to be placed on his shoulders. Then the line took up its march and struggled on. For a few steps Foster's neck stood the strain, then the old ache returned. The trail was good, as trails go, but he found it a different thing from walking on the level. Every step had to be of different length. Now up six inches, now down three into a hole. Small differences, but each change from the level caused the pack to pull at his neck and give his tortured muscles another twinge. His feet, unaccustomed to shoe-packs, hurt him also, and

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every stone or stick in the path seemed to lie at the exact spot where his next step would naturally fall.

In desperation, for the trail gave no signs of coming to an end, he began counting his steps.

"I will take one hundred more," he would say to himself, and then still another hundred, till at last his perseverance was rewarded by coming suddenly into an open glade at the foot of which lay a small lake.

"Thank goodness," he exclaimed and dropped the pack.

Bob, as leader of the party, felt it incumbent upon him to keep the others up to their work, but in view of the fact that it was the first portage granted them a ten minute rest before embarking for the short paddle.

"How far do you expect to go to-day?" asked Tom when they were resting comfortably.

"I should like to make Lake Evelyn, but we will just go along as far as we can easily."

"Where is Lake Evelyn?"

"Let's see. This next carry is a short one.

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Then a two mile lake ; a mile carry ; another short lake, a three mile carry —— ”

“ Great Scott ! ” this from Foster.

“ And it’s a bad one too,” went on Bob. “ Then a mile paddle, and a half-mile carry. That’s all.”

“ Oh, is that all ? ”

“ Well, we had better get going,” said Bob, getting up. “ The journey won’t get any shorter for thinking about it.”

They all found the paddle a pleasant change, and all too soon were across.

“ How about a canoe this time ? ” asked Bob as they landed.

“ All right,” said Benson at once, coming forward. “ Just fix it for me, if you will, though ; I am not on to the hang of it yet.”

Bob and Macklin lifted up the canoe and placed it across Tom’s shoulders. A moment or two of balancing and he was off.

“ When you get tired look for two trees close together and lower the bow into the crotch,” called Macklin after him and then loaded Foster with the other birch.

Benson found the canoe rather lighter

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than the pack, but he discovered that the branches had an annoying habit of catching the bow or stern and swinging the craft round in a way which nearly threw him from his feet and largely increased the exertion of carrying.

He walked on for what he thought a fair distance, hoping to catch a glimpse of the next lake. No sign of it. He saw several trees which would have made a good rest for the canoe, but struggled on. At last he felt that he must rest. The paddle blades were cutting into the muscles of his neck in a most painful fashion, and nothing he did seemed to relieve the tension. He began looking for a suitable tree, but saw none. He walked on, struggling against his desire to drop the canoe to the ground. Still no tree.

"I must put it down in fifty yards," he declared to himself, "tree or no tree."

Just as he reached the determined point he looked ahead.

The forest seemed more open just ahead. He kept on. The lake burst into view, and there close by the water was the long desired

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crotch. He lowered the canoe as gently as he could to avoid making a leak, and sat down slowly.

"Ah!" he said.

A moment later Foster came in sight, his face red with his exertions, and close behind were the other two.

When Foster reached the lake he stood uncertain for a moment. "Hold on, Joe. Let us help you with that canoe," called Bob from the rear, but before he could drop his pack and reach Foster the latter slung the canoe off his head and let it fall heavily.

"I won't carry the darned thing another instant," he growled.

Bob did not say anything, but knelt quickly by the side of the canoe and examined the bottom anxiously. The others looked on in silence.

"I'm afraid we are going to have a leak there," he said turning his head and pointing to a crack near the bow.

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CHAPTER IV

MAKING CAMP

Bob applied his lips to the hole and sucked violently.

"Yes," he said, "I can get air through. We'll have to mend it now."

He cast his eye around till he saw a birch tree, and quickly gathering a piece of bark and some small sticks, had a fire blazing in a few minutes. Macklin had meanwhile brought the gum-pot from where it hung in the bow of the other canoe.

Bob melted the mixture and then, making a torch of a piece of bark, heated the surface around the hole and the surrounding gum. Then he poured a little of the gum into the hole and, wetting his fingers, pressed it in hard, moulding the outer surface so as to avoid any projection.

"There," he said rising from his knees. "That ought to hold a while."

"It shows you how careful you should be,"

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said Macklin reprovingly to the culprit.
“We’ve wasted half an hour.”

“I’m sorry,” said Foster, really penitent.
“But I thought my neck was going to break.
I couldn’t carry it any further.”

“Oh, well,” broke in Walters. “No great harm was done. Let’s get on.”

As every one felt hungry when they had crossed the lake Macklin suggested lunch.

“No,” said Bob. “Let’s get this next carry behind us first. It’s only a mile. Then we can have a long paddle before doing any more hard work. We can digest better.”

The others saw the force of this argument and yielded, though the vigorous exercise had made the idea of food very alluring.

“I suggest that we make this portage with only one rest.”

There was a howl of protest.

“Oh, nonsense! we can do it easily. We’ll get something to eat all the sooner, too. Just grit your teeth and fight it out. I’ll lead the way.”

Bob shouldered the canoe and set the pace. Long before the fifteen minutes which he had

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set himself as a mark were over, his shoulders and neck were aching, but in view of his recent speech he kept on to the last bitter second.

"Phew," said Foster as he dropped his pack a moment later. "That was fierce. Please let us have a good long rest."

"That confounded gum-pot came loose," remarked Macklin when he had recovered his breath, "and kept swaying back and forth right in my face. It's odd how annoying a little thing like that can become. I nearly cried with pure anger. There it hung just out of reach and marked time to my steps. Most irritating!"

"Yes," said Tom laughing. "A fly persisted in lighting on the end of my nose. Every time that I freed one hand it flew away and as soon as I started up again back it came."

"Well," said Bob, "I hate to be the slave driver, and these reminiscences are very amusing, but we have another little scuse to go before we eat, and I'm very hungry."

Once more the cavalcade started, and with

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much pain and protest accomplished the journey to the lake.

Bob had a pot on the fire quickly and they filled up on bacon and bread brought from the cabin and washed it down with cups of strong tea.

"Gee, this is great," mumbled Foster with his mouth full. "Give me some more."

"My cooking seems to be appreciated," murmured Bob as he speared the last piece of bacon and dropped the frying-pan on the ground. "That's the last of it."

Full and happy, they stretched themselves on the ground and dozed off. A gentle breeze fanned the lake into ripples. A few scattered clouds floated overhead, and made shadows on the water, but the beauties of nature did not compare with the beauty of rest, and no one moved. The hot sun baked their wet clothes and relaxed their muscles till a gentle snore from Macklin brought Bob out of his day-dreams and to his feet.

"Wash out the cups, will you," he told Benson, "while I clean the grease out of the pan?"

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Heating some water he soon had the frying-pan in presentable shape and then allowed Macklin to pack up.

"Aren't you glad you took my advice?" Bob asked the company as they eased the canoes into the water. "A gentle paddle is more to my taste than a portage would be. I feel heavy."

A chorus of assent greeted his words as the shore slipped away behind them.

"Even this is more work than I really want," declared Macklin whimsically. "My idea of Paradise is what we have just left."

They paddled slowly, for the languor of the midday rest was still upon them and all dreaded the hard work ahead. But all things come to an end, and soon they were once more treading a moss grown trail.

Before they had gone far, a stream across which a couple of trees had been felled barred their road.

Macklin was the first to try the passage, and stepped out on the slippery surface with gingerly care. Half-way across one of the logs shifted slightly under his weight. He

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lost his balance, made a wild endeavor to regain it and would have succeeded, but his pack slewed and the next moment he was sprawling across the logs, clutching for support frantically with one hand while with the other he endeavored to keep the pack from sliding off into the water.

For a moment the others were powerless to aid him, so comical was the spectacle, but Benson was the first to regain control of his faculties. Dropping his own burden, he was just in time to save the pack from a wetting, as Frank, despairing of assistance from his comrades, was about to let the duffle go and save himself.

"Nice help you fellows are!" he growled when he had once reached the further bank in safety. "You just stood and grinned like chessy-cats. No thanks to you the pack isn't soaked."

"Sorry, Frank," said Bob still struggling with his laughter, "I couldn't help. You looked so foolish standing on one toe and waving the other foot in the air just before the crash came."

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"I dare say," said Frank Macklin, only partly appeased, "but I'm going to sit down here now and watch the rest of you cross. I hope you all fall in."

Macklin seated himself on the bank, but he was disappointed in his vengeance. Profiting by his experience the others used all possible precaution and crossed in safety.

Once more they took up the journey, and with weary necks plodded on. The rests got longer and the distance covered shorter as the day wore on and more than once Bob looked at his watch anxiously and prodded the others all he dared.

When they reached the beginning of the three mile carry he held a consultation of war.

"We can't make Lake Evelyn to-night," he announced. "It's three o'clock now. Evelyn is out of the question. This portage is three miles. It will take us all of two hours at the rate we are going now. Possibly longer."

"What are you getting at?" asked Macklin.

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"I move we camp here for the night."

"Great idea," assented Foster, with warmth.

"My reason is that we are green at making camp. It will take us a good while. It will be dark before we get through supper even now. And if we go on we will be hurried. How about it?"

"I think it is wiser," agreed Macklin. "After all, we don't have to be in any place at any given time."

"All right, then," said Bob, getting to his feet, and looking around. "Let's pick a place for the tents."

"How about this?" suggested Macklin.

"Not open enough. Over there is better. It's more open."

"Yes, this will do," he called a moment later. "Bring the packs over."

When the others arrived they found that Bob had already cleared enough space from the underbrush for one tent, and was engaged in packing down the lumpy soil with the back of his axe.

"Get it as level as you can," he warned

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Benson, who began work near him. "You will appreciate it at three in the morning."

"It will take more than a lump of dirt under me to keep me awake to-night," said Benson.

"Don't fool yourself," replied Bob. "You'll sleep like a log for four hours or so, but if your bed isn't comfortable you wake up then, and stay awake."

Macklin and Foster were meanwhile cutting the necessary poles and stakes, and all four helping the tents were raised and made secure.

"Macklin and I will get supper if you two will rustle for some balsam boughs," said Bob to the two novices, who seemed inclined to sit down and rest. "Get a hustle on."

Picking up the axes they tramped wearily into the forest, and soon the ring of blows could be heard in the distance. Frank chopped two logs, while Bob unpacked the food and got out what he wanted.

"What shall we have?" he asked as he rummaged among the bags.

"Oh, anything—so long as there is enough

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of it," replied Macklin. "I have a large void to fill."

"How about bacon, macaroni, johnny-cake and tea?"

"Fine."

"We may get some trout here, too," said Bob reflectively. "Suppose you take Foster and make a few casts."

"Good idea," returned the other as he placed his logs in position to form the fireplace. "I'd better get you some fire-wood first, though."

"Never mind. I'll attend to it. We want the trout as soon as possible."

"They are a long time getting some balsam," remarked Macklin. "Oh, here they come," he added, as he heard a rustle in the bushes.

Foster appeared, or at least his legs did, for his head was screened by a mass of boughs he carried in his arms. He dropped them with a sigh of relief near the tent.

"Mean things to carry," he volunteered.

"That's not the way to carry them," said Bob briefly. "This is easier."

He took up an axe, stood it upright, and

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dropped the boughs over the handle one by one. The spreading branches clung tightly to one another and the axe head kept them from slipping off.

"See," said Bob as he pressed the pile down. "You have only a quarter load carried this way. You can put on as many as the handle will hold, then just swing it over your shoulder." He illustrated the idea. "Much easier that way."

Foster, enlightened, departed for another load just as Benson appeared carrying his branches in the orthodox manner.

Bob looked up, interested.

"Who taught you to carry boughs that way?" he asked.

"Why,—nobody," said Benson. "It just struck me as an easy way. Isn't it right?"

"Sure," said Bob, but as he turned to his fire his face wore a pleased look. "See that? I like to see a man use his head," he said to Macklin.

"Want to come fishing?" called the captain, grinning appreciatively.

Benson turned, his face lighting up. "Yes,

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indeed," he said eagerly. "But oughtn't I to get some more boughs?"

"Foster will get them," said Bob; "and if we need more you can get them later."

Bob watched the canoe till it rounded the bend and then turned to his cooking. He mixed his batter for the johnny-cake, sliced his bacon, and put the macaroni in water to soak. From time to time he added wood to the fire, in order to get a big bed of coals for his cooking, and in the intervals helped Foster spread in the tents the boughs he had brought.

In the midst of their work, he heard the soft dip of a paddle. "What luck?" he called over his shoulder.

"Nine," announced Benson, a ring of triumph in his voice. It was his first experience at trout fishing.

"Good," said Bob heartily. "That's fine. Let's see them."

He walked down to the canoe, where Macklin was busy cleaning the trout.

"How's that for size?" the latter said holding one up by the gills.

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"A beauty—must run two pounds."

"Every bit of it."

"We'll have these four for supper to-night, and keep the rest for the morning."

He picked up the trout and carried them off to his fire.

"Johnny-cake is almost done," he announced as he tested it with a sliver of wood where it stood in the oven before the fire. "Get busy with the bacon, Mack, while I fry these trout."

Tom and Joe stood by and watched while the cooking was being done, unable to tear themselves away from the appetizing odors which floated near the fire.

"Warm up the plates, you lazy beggars," commanded Bob from where he crouched by the fire. "And get the knives and forks out."

"All ready," he cried a moment later as he gave the trout a final turn. "Hold out your plates."

"Good trout, these," he said a moment later, when each was attacking a piled up plate. "Where did you get them?"

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"About a quarter mile up the lake, where that little stream comes in. They were thick."

"Who did the fishing?"

"Oh, I let Tom do most of it. He caught on very quickly."

"You must have had some fun with that two pounder."

"You bet I did," exclaimed Benson, as he reached over for some more johnny-cake. "I nearly lost him at that. I got my reel all snarled up trying to turn it the wrong way, just as he headed for the canoe. Things were lively for a moment, I tell you. But Mack saved him with a bully swoop of the net."

"Well, that about fills me up," remarked Macklin a few moments later as he leaned back against a tree. "My compliments, Bob. You're a great cook."

"Thank you," said Bob with a grin. "But if you think I am going to cook for you three hulks every day, you have another guess coming. We must take turns."

"Great Scott, must I imperil my digestion by eating what those infants concoct!" ex-

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claimed Macklin in alarm. "Be a good fellow, Bob, and sign up for the whole trip."

"Not on your life. If you don't like their cooking, do it yourself."

"I would almost as leave eat their cooking as mine," replied Macklin, mournfully. "It's sure death either way, and theirs might be the quicker."

"I can't stand for that!" said Benson, giving Macklin a push which keeled him over. "Just to punish you, I'll cook the breakfast myself and make you eat it."

"Don't worry, Tom," said Bob. "I have never yet had to use force to make Frank eat, no matter what the stuff was. As a rule I have had to fight for my share. He's only bluffing."

Dusk had crept upon them while they were eating. The forest had grown grim and impenetrable, in contrast to which the little circle illumined by their fire took on a feeling of home.

Bob hung a kettle of water on the fire to heat for washing up, and Macklin made sure of his supply of fire-wood.

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The camp duties finished, they piled wood on the fire, and retired to the tents. For a while voices sounded loudly, as they retold the incidents of the day. Then as one by one they rolled into their blankets, silence took possession of the camp. Tom Benson's last thought as he pillowed his head on his arm was that he had earned his rest. And the thought was a peculiarly satisfying one.

CHAPTER V

WIND AND WATER

"WHICH one of you was guilty of snoring last night?" asked Macklin as he crept out of his tent in the gray of the morning and found Benson kicking the embers together in an endeavor to start the fire.

"I'm sure I don't know," said Tom with a laugh. "I slept like a log till ten minutes ago, when the cold woke me up."

A morning mist lay heavily over the lake and forest, and both shivered as they crouched over the fire.

"Any the worse for yesterday?" asked Frank.

"Pretty stiff, but it will work off."

As the fire blazed up Bob appeared through the flap of his tent, rubbing his eyes.

"I thought I heard voices," he said. "Gee, it's chilly."

The coffee was on the fire and preparations

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for breakfast well under way when the sound of a snore from the tent attracted Bob's notice.

"Hello, isn't Foster up yet? He is a lazy one. Hi, Joe!" he called, and getting no response threw open the flap. Foster lay curled up, fast asleep.

"Breakfast's ready," Bob shouted, and the word seemed to penetrate the brain of the sleeper, for after a squirm or two he sat up.

"Hello; breakfast, did you say?" and rolling out of his blankets he stepped gingerly out to the fire.

"He's the guilty man," said Macklin aside to Benson. "Did you hear that last snore?"

Aloud he said: "Who was guilty of the snoring in your tent last night, Foster?"

"If you heard any, it must have been Tom," the culprit replied innocently. "I never snore myself."

A shout of laughter from the others puzzled him, and his air of injured innocence only made them laugh the harder.

"No use, Joe!" said Macklin at last. "You can't throw that bluff. You ought to

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get up earlier if you want to escape detection. That last nap of yours betrayed you. We've all been standing listening to you play a nasal solo. I must say you do it rather well," he added critically. "Great power on the high notes; but if you don't mind I wish you would cut it out in the future. You kept me awake last night."

"Did I? I'm mighty sorry," said Foster quickly.

"Oh, well, it wasn't for long, so I'll pass it over this time."

"Breakfast," said Bob, and the party sat down to lay in fuel against the three mile carry that confronted them.

"We must get a move on," announced Bob twenty minutes later, when the last crumb had disappeared. "Get to work on the packs."

Benson and Foster found that it was no easy matter to collect and stow away in small compass their household goods. They had watched Bob do it at St. Pierre, but somehow this was different, and they arranged and rearranged the bags of food without arriving at

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a satisfactory solution. Finally Bob came to their help.

"You are putting too much in this pack," he said critically. "That's your trouble." Under his experienced hand the pack flew together like magic. "Now," he said, "heave on the thongs."

This they found difficult, for their hands were swollen and stiff from their labor of yesterday.

"Tighter," commanded Bob. "If you don't get things really tight now, the pack will fall to pieces before the day is half over. It's worth doing right. You'll save time in the end."

He turned away to take down the tents, folded them, and laid them ready for the next pack.

Macklin had meanwhile washed the dishes and was closing up that pack.

"Hold on a minute," exclaimed Bob; "you've forgotten the lunch."

"Where have you been hiding that?" asked Macklin. "I was looking for something more to eat."

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Bob grinned. "Oh, I had it safe. We can't stop to cook lunch to-day. We'll just have cold bacon and johnny-cake."

Fresh from a good breakfast the idea did not entirely appeal to the inexperience of Foster, and he said as much.

"Oh, you won't find it so bad," retorted Bob cheerily. "If you do, why, I'll eat your share."

The first few hundred yards of the carry set a multitude of stiff muscles shrieking protest in Benson's neck. It did not seem possible to endure the pain. But as the sweat broke out on his body, and the exertion of walking forced his blood through his body, the muscles worked more easily and the pain lessened.

The others were undergoing much of the same torture, and it was an irritable party that gathered for the first rest.

"Not much fun in this," grunted Foster as he swung his pack down. "Wouldn't we have had a better time if we had taken guides?"

"Less work, of course. But not so much freedom."

"You don't call having that strap round

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your head freedom, do you?" retorted Foster sarcastically.

"Not in that sense. But we have only our own wishes to consult. We can do as much or little in a day as we choose, because we are doing the work."

"You learn much more," broke in Macklin. "You have got to do a thing yourself to learn how. Watching a guide won't teach you anything."

"It will teach me the blessing of leisure, anyway," retorted Foster, and in the laugh that followed the irritations of packing were forgotten.

Benson led off on the next stage of the carry, and plodded along at a fast gait. "The more ground you cover when you're fresh, the better," he argued, just as he came to a bend in the trail. Twenty yards ahead were three partridges.

He came to a stop with a jolt, put down his pack and hurried along his back trail.

"Hey, Bob," he called in a low voice as he met the others. "Partridges just ahead! Where's your gun?"

WIND AND WATER

Much excited, they all put down their loads, and Bob went ahead with the pistol.

"How far?" he asked.

"Just round the bend."

They waited in tense interest for developments.

"Bang!"

"He got one!" exclaimed Foster hungrily.

"May have missed," murmured Macklin dispassionately.

"Bang." A pause, and then "bang!"

They could hear Bob beating round in the bushes for some time and then saw him coming toward them.

"Got two!" he called waving the birds triumphantly.

"Fine!" said Macklin. "We'll have good eats to-night. Nice plump birds."

"Third one get away?" asked Tom.

"Yes. I shot the first one dead, but just creased the other with my first shot and my second didn't kill him. Had to scuffle after him in the bushes. The third meanwhile made off."

"Funny this beggar let you have two shots

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at him," said Foster, examining the second bird.

"You can frequently take a dozen," said Bob. "They call them the 'fool hen' up here. They just stand and look at you."

He tied the birds to the nearest canoe and they resumed the march.

"What's wrong with this blamed thing?" said Macklin a moment later as he vainly tried to get the canoe balanced. "Hi, you sinner," he called to Bob. "What do you mean shoving those birds off on me? You've destroyed the balance."

"Stand still a minute and I'll untie them. I was just wondering if you would notice the difference?" he added with a chuckle.

"I like your nerve," growled Macklin. "I'll get even with you."

Even the longest carry must have an end. When they had labored for an hour and a half and almost given up hope of ever seeing water again, the lake opened before them.

"That was fierce," admitted even Bob as he got from under the canoe and reveled in the cool breeze which greeted him. "There was

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not a breath of air in the forest. I am literally soaked." And he applied his handkerchief vigorously.

"There were some confounded little gnats that kept biting me all the way," complained Foster, rubbing his face. "They were mighty vicious."

"What did they look like?" asked Bob.

"Oh, little things. Hardly a quarter of an inch; black."

"Those were black flies, not gnats," said Bob.

"Black flies? The things I have always heard about?" asked Foster in surprise.

"Yes. What did you think they looked like? Horse-flies?"

"Yes," admitted Foster. "I never thought they were so small."

"Their size didn't seem to interfere with their bite, did it?"

"Not on your life. Just look at my face."

"Try some citronella," said Bob offering a small bottle. "It will do the trick, if you apply it often enough. Rub it in well behind your ears. That's their favorite place."

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"I've already found that out," said Foster ruefully, and used the oil liberally.

"We are going to have a taste of rough water," said Bob as he looked at the lake. "The wind is getting up. You'll have to mind your p's and q's, Tom."

"Righto," said the other as they pushed off.

Bob's prophecy was correct, and though the water was far from rough, it seemed to Tom, in contrast to the mirror-like surfaces they had been paddling over, that there was quite a sea on.

"Take your time, Tom," cautioned Bob as they got out from the lee of the shore and met the full force of the wind. "Just keep to your natural stroke."

At first Tom felt slightly flustered, as the canoe rose and fell, twisted and danced on the cross seas, for he had not as yet the instinctive poise of the old canoeman.

But as the minutes went by he fell into the swing of his work, and Bob had nothing to complain of. At times he watched the other canoe, and was relieved to find that it too was being handled skilfully.

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They reached the further shore without trouble, but Bob looked anxiously at the sky.

"The wind is getting round to the east," he said. "I'm afraid we're in for some rain."

"Don't be a croaker, Bob," said Macklin. "I don't believe there's any rain within miles of us."

At lunch that day the despised bacon and johnny-cake of the morning met with an eager reception.

"Sure you want some, Joe?" teased Bob as he was dividing it. "You won't hurt my feelings by not eating it, you know. So don't take it just to be polite."

"Well, I feel as though I could just toy with a little of it," retorted Foster. "Just hand my share over, and I'll give you back what I can't eat."

As they were about to start again, Foster gravely presented Bob with a crumb.

"Here are my leavings," he said. "Don't overeat yourself."

The partridges that night, with Bob's able cooking, were a great success, and under their magic influence Tom and Joe agreed that

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wood life was the best sport they had ever experienced.

"Odd, how a full stomach colors the point of view," murmured Bob, as he listened to their enthusiastic remarks.

By the end of the third day, the muscles of Bob and Frank had regained the strength lost by a year's freedom from packing, and even the other two had acquired some of the poise that comes from an acquaintance with the tump-line. At least they could walk their twenty minutes without becoming exhausted, and bid fair to be as handy with a pack by the end of the trip as their more experienced companions.

When Bob looked out of his tent on the fourth morning he found his prophecy fulfilled. A misty rain was falling. The ground was soggy, giving evidence of a hard rain during the night, and the wind was strong from the east.

"Tough luck, fellows," he said as they gazed mournfully at the low flying clouds. "We're in for it to-day. I was hoping to get into permanent camp before it struck us."

WIND AND WATER

"What shall we do? Wait here till it clears?" asked Benson.

"Oh, no. We'll push right on. The day's route isn't too easy at the best, and this rain will make it worse, but we can reach our camp to-night without trouble. Let's get moving."

The art of lighting a fire, cooking breakfast and breaking camp in the rain are all things that must be learned, and Foster and Benson learned them that morning.

It took all Joe's courage to step out from his warm tent into the cold rain and do his share of the work, but after some hesitation he took the plunge. The drizzle enveloped him immediately. Goose skin jumped out all over him and he wandered aimlessly round trying to keep warm.

"Pitch in and chop some wood, Joe!" called Bob from the door of the tent where he was preparing the bacon for breakfast under cover of the flap. "That will make you warm!"

It was a disagreeable time for all and tempers wore to a thin edge before the fire

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had been coaxed into a sufficient blaze to make the coffee. Then a cup all around, without waiting for the bacon, cleared the atmosphere, and made the rain seem less of a catastrophe.

"Never mind getting wet," urged Bob. "The creek will do it anyway. So just get wet now, and stay wet, and it won't hurt you."

"Do we strike the creek to-day?" inquired Tom.

"Yes, a couple of hundred yards' carry—and we reach it. Paddle down a mile. Portage for two miles—take to the creek again for eight. Half a mile of lake, and there we are."

"That doesn't sound so bad," volunteered Foster.

"It wouldn't be, except for the creek. She's narrow, overgrown with alders—shallow, and twists and turns on herself till it makes you dizzy. They have named her La Chienne, and she richly deserves the name."

"Dog?" said Benson inquiringly.

"Yes!" replied Bob emphatically.

CHAPTER VI

DOWN THE CREEK

It was with relief that the party started on their dismal tramp. It had been a pretty problem to make up the packs without getting the contents wet, but was finally solved by completing the packs in the shelter of the tents and strapping the latter on the outside.

"We will have to be careful with the packs to-day, or we will tear a hole in the tents. So go easy," warned Bob as they started.

Their spirits were not raised by the first sight of the stream. Hardly twenty feet wide, it swirled chocolate-brown between its mud banks. Bedraggled alder bushes leaned at intervals over its surface, and gathered to themselves in an untidy mass the bits of wood and grass that floated down.

The approach to the stream led through open land on which the grass, knee high, sent a shower of drops over them at every step.

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“Well!” exclaimed Bob, as he stopped, “this is sure peach weather!”

There was no sense in resting when it meant simply sitting on a mud-bank in a drizzle, so without delay they embarked. The river twisted every fifty feet and made paddling hard work, as at times the bends were too sharp to allow the canoes to make the turn without backing, and Macklin, miscalculating, more than once drove his bow ashore, a proceeding which invariably called forth a stream of protest from Foster, whose face came with unpleasant force into contact with the bushes.

“We take out on the left there!” shouted Bob to the other canoe, which was in the lead as they made their hundredth turn and came in sight of a wooded bank.

“Real trees at last,” said Foster, whose stock of patience had worn thin, and to whom an honest growth of maple and spruce was a distinct relief.

The landing was a bad one. A steep bank gave little foothold, and the log which at one time had served for a dock had so rotted

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away as to give the most precarious of supports.

However, they were already so wet that a little more made slight difference. In fact the discomfort was so great that it became humorous, and before they had carried the last pack to firm ground they were joking over their troubles.

Bob led the way with one of the canoes. He was anxious to travel as fast as possible, for once on the stream there was no place to camp, and to travel it in darkness would have been well-nigh impossible. They had to make Chienne Lake, and it was already late.

He walked along at a good pace. The trail was level and hard, the rain as yet not having accomplished much through the thick canopy of leaves. Not until the full twenty minutes were up did he put down, though the canoe, thoroughly water-soaked within and without, was pounds heavier than usual.

"Five minutes' rest," he announced. And though Foster grumbled, at the end of five minutes Bob started off again.

He had not gone a hundred yards when his

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headstrap broke with a snap, and let down the full weight of the canoe on his shoulders. Bob's first impulse was to stop and mend it, but realizing that that would entail stopping the whole party he determined to keep on.

His shoulder-muscles having this extra work thrown upon them naturally tired sooner, and without the tump-line he could give them no relief, so that the pain soon became severe.

"I can't put down," Bob said to himself. "It would be a bad example to the rest," and he resorted to the expedient of shifting the greater part of the weight from one shoulder to the other at short intervals. This made the canoe more unmanageable than ever, but it did ease the pain.

"For the love of Mike, Bob!" said a voice behind him, "aren't you ever going to stop? This canoe weighs a ton!"

It was Foster.

"Pretty soon, Joe," said Bob evasively. "We are nearly there."

They trudged along another hundred yards in silence.

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"My shoulders are broken," pleaded Joe, his voice taking on an angry tone.

"Stick it out, Joe ; it's not much further."

Bob heard grumbling behind him, but Joe still followed.

Another hundred yards were covered.

"My neck's broken," snorted Joe at last. "I'm going to put down now. You can do what you like. I'm not going another step to please anybody."

Bob heard the canoe being shoved against a tree, and realized that he could persuade Foster no further.

"All right," he called, "we'll rest here."

Foster sat in sullen silence during the wait, but at Bob's suggestion resumed his burden without comment.

Three minutes' walk brought them to the stream again.

It was wide and shallow at this point and in clear weather several big rocks with flat tops made a pleasant resting place.

"We'll lunch here, don't you think?" inquired Bob of the others. "It will give us strength for what lies ahead."

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"Sure," said Macklin. "My stomach tells me it's past noon."

"It's only too correct," commented Bob. "My watch says 12:45. That's the reason," he went on turning to Foster, "why I made that last carry such a long one. We'll have to hustle like everything to make camp before dark."

"Humph," grunted Foster ungraciously.

"I know it was tough," went on Bob, without heeding the other's manner, "but I had it tougher than you did. My headstrap broke, and I carried the canoe without it."

"You're crazy!" said Foster brusquely.

Bob flushed. A retort was on the tip of his tongue, but he choked it back in time, and changed the subject.

"This rain has one good feature," he said, turning to Macklin, who was frowning at Foster's rudeness. "It will raise the stream and give us a bit more water over the sand-bars."

"Yes, it will be some help. But there has hardly been enough rain yet to make much difference."

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"Every quarter of an inch helps," Bob replied cheerfully. "How about a cake of chocolate all round? I got some out this morning."

"Fine," said Benson. "I was wondering how soon you were going to let us sample it. My mouth has been watering for it."

"We might have brought more," acknowledged Bob. "But I was trying to keep the weight down all I could. It does hit the spot, doesn't it?"

"How is the food holding out?" asked Macklin.

"Pretty well. But we will have to get some game or it won't last us. Beginning with tomorrow, we must hustle for our dinner."

"I am getting tired of our bill of fare, anyway," said Frank. "Those partridges were the only thing that saved my digestion."

There was a strong temptation to linger over the meal once their muscles had stopped aching, but Bob soon gave the word to start.

For a short distance the creek showed no new characteristics; it was the same muddy stream swirling between muddy banks. But

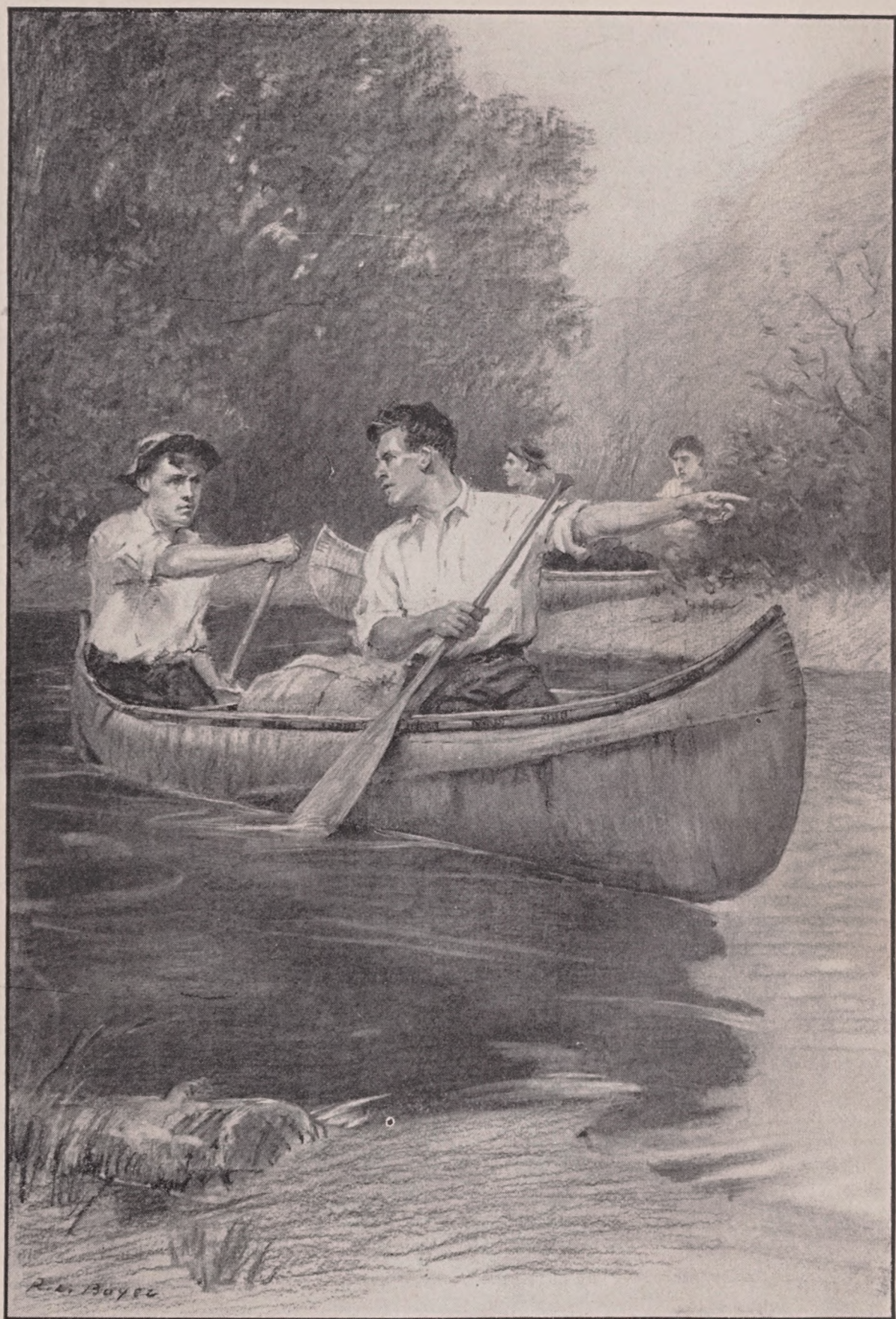
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soon it passed out of the ridge of high land and entered into a stretch of flat country between two ranges of low hills. The swamps extended on both sides of the creek to the foot of the hills, which were made impassable by thickets of alder and low-growing shrubs. Here and there a bit of higher land was surmounted by hardwood, but for the most part the alder scrub predominated. Through this soft ground the stream had carved its way with no sense of direction, taking the softest ground for its own, and consequently the bends and twists were appalling.

"I have watched that hilltop for the last half hour," said Benson pointing to one which was high enough to overtop the alders, "and we never seem to get any further away or any nearer. One minute it is ahead, the next astern, then on the left, then on the right. It makes me dizzy."

Bob laughed. "That hill is our goal. When we reach it our troubles are over. It's only three miles as the crow flies, but triple that by this confounded creek."

"Why don't we carry across then?"



“HERE’S A SAND-BANK”

DOWN THE CREEK

"Too swampy," said Bob briefly. "With all our troubles we can make faster time this way."

"Hello," said Benson suddenly. "Here's a sand-bank. What shall we do?"

"Try to clear it close under the bank," replied Bob, suiting his action to the word by swinging the bow of the canoe. The attempt was vain, for the channel ran close to the shore and a forbidding tangle of alders kept the canoe from following.

"That's the worst of these alders," said Bob savagely as the canoe grounded heavily. "They are not an atom of use for anything, and take up all the room besides. No help for it. Hop out!"

Tom disembarked on the sand spit and hauled vigorously at the canoe, Bob helping all he could with the paddle. When the canoe lay square across the barrier Bob stepped out, pushed the canoe a couple of feet further, told Tom to get in, pushed the canoe into deep water, climbed in himself, after allowing his boots to drip over the side, and pushed off.

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The other canoe followed and went through the same procedure.

"Nuisance, isn't it?" remarked Benson lightly.

Fifty yards further they were again blocked and again pulled the canoes across.

"Makes a lot of extra work," said Benson, when they were once more afloat.

Five minutes later and they were again stranded.

"Beats the Dutch!" exclaimed Benson with emphasis.

"Oh, confound the things," he said wearily a moment later, when having just taken his seat he saw confronting him, only a few canoe lengths away, another bar.

Bob chuckled. "I thought you would soon realize the futility of calling them bad names," he said. "You might as well save your breath. Just listen to them in the other canoe, though!"

Through the quiet drizzle of the rain drifted certain explosive remarks.

"Macklin is in fine voice," said Bob dryly, and dipped his paddle.

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They continued in dogged silence. Bend after bend they passed; bar after bar tried their patience with its mute sign of "no passage," and still the hilltop circled giddily round the points of the compass without deigning to approach. The rain at intervals developed into a downpour which searched out the weak points of their clothing and kept them dripping everywhere.

"There is one blessing about these sand-banks," said Bob grimly. "The exercise helps to keep us warm."

"Not so you would notice it. I'm sort of chilly," replied Benson, digging his paddle in viciously. Then, "Suffering Jehoshaphat," he groaned, "just look at that!"

Even Bob's spirit quailed for a moment at what he saw. An old maple had given up its hold on life, and lay stretched across the stream from bank to bank. It had been a big tree and it offered a good hour's delay if it had to be cut out. Its lower surface was a foot above the stream.

Bob stared at it in silence and considered the situation. It was growing late. Time

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was of value if they meant to reach camp that night, and he realized that they could by no means spare the hour necessary to clear the path with the axe.

"What are we going to do?" asked Benson.

Bob looked at the banks. "We can carry round," he said half to himself, "by cutting out the alders. Hard job, though."

He looked intently at the tree. The other canoe had meanwhile caught up and waited in silence for his decision.

"I have an idea," he said at length. "I don't know whether or not it will work. We can try it, though."

"What is it?" asked Macklin.

"Push underneath," said Bob. "Jump up on the tree, Tom, and let's see."

Tom balanced himself in the swaying canoe, and clambered safely onto the trunk.

"Take hold of the pack, now, and pull it up with you," said Bob. "You better get up there too, Mack."

Bob then moved forward in the canoe and with the help of his weight and the united efforts of the others tried to force the canoe

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deep enough in the water to let the up-curved bow pass.

"Almost," he grunted, as the canoe sank. "Another inch. Good! Look out!" he yelled as the bow slipped under suddenly, and nearly threw him into the river. "Steady, there."

The rest was easy until the stern was reached and that in the same manner was forced under, Bob climbing on the tree and Benson standing in the canoe.

"Hi-yi!" the latter exclaimed in triumph as the stern cleared. "Victory!"

The pack was loaded again, and the canoe moored to a projecting branch while they turned their attention to its mate.

"I've just invented an improvement on your method," announced Macklin as Foster brought the canoe into position.

"Yes?" said Bob inquiringly.

"Don't take the pack out till you get the bow under. Then shove the canoe along, put the pack back and pass the stern. How about it?"

"Great head," said Bob approvingly. "The extra weight will be a great help."

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They acted on the suggestion. It worked perfectly, and soon they were once more afloat.

"I'm learning," said Macklin with pride. "I'm not in your class yet, Bob, but look out. I'll surprise you yet."

"I've lost the hill entirely now," complained Benson a few moments later. "It must have run off somewhere."

"Dead astern of us," said Bob, who knew his country, and was not averse to grand-stand effects. "And now dead ahead," this as they swept round a bend, "and here we are!" he announced with a final flourish of his paddle.

As he spoke the stream widened, the alder bushes opened out and they floated into a little lake which washed the foot of the rocky hill they had been watching for so long.

"Is this where we camp?" said Benson with a sigh of relief sinking down in the canoe and laying his paddle across the gunwales.

"No, this is the little lake. The big one is half a mile further down-stream."

"More creek work," this in dismay from Benson.

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"Yes, but not the same. The rest is easy. Don't worry. Do you see that sand spit?" he asked as the canoe drifted by a sandy promontory. "That's where we get the trout."

"Big ones?" asked Benson.

"Big ones!" said Bob.

CHAPTER VII

“ HERE WE ARE ”

THE stream below the little Chienne Lake justified Bob's confidence. Its banks were softly wooded; it was wide and free from obstruction. It was a friendly stream; in distinct contrast to the irritable unsociableness of the other or the mighty anger of bigger streams.

Even the all-soaking rain could not hide this quality of friendliness. The drifting mist was permeated with it, and the canoes shot forward under the new power of strongly wielded paddles. At times the stream for half its width rippled noisily over obstructing rocks, but always was there a deeper channel, and Benson exulted in the uninterrupted swing of his arms as he and Bob drove the canoe ahead.

After an interval the stream abruptly widened into a small bay, dotted with the

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broad leaves of water-lilies, which in turn opened on a lake a mile long and half as wide.

As Tom gave a breath of satisfaction at the sight, Bob twisted his paddle sharply and turned the canoe to the right. A few strokes and he let the canoe drift.

“ Here we are,” he said simply, while the rain dripped off his hat and formed a puddle round his knees.

Benson found himself facing a stretch of sandy beach, curved like a crescent. A high bank rose abruptly back of it, thickly covered with trees, up which a path could be discerned.

The canoe grated on the shore ; Bob stepped out, steadied the craft for Benson, lifted out the pack, and then stretched himself.

“ I’m tired ! ” he said, and Tom nodded agreement.

When the others had landed, the work of making camp commenced.

The rifles and rods were unstrapped from the gunwales and the canoes turned bottom up under the lee of the bank. The paddles were laid in the bushes, and the packs carried up the incline. Ten yards from the top was

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a small clearing with the remains of a fireplace. Two mouldy brown masses of balsam needles disclosed where the tents had been pitched previously, and Bob put his pack down with a feeling that he was once more at home.

"We can't hope to do much to-night," he said, "toward making camp comfortable."

"It certainly doesn't look so," agreed Foster dismally as he sat hunched up on a pack and stared at the water soaked ground.

"It's not as bad as all that, Joe," Bob said with a grin of cheerfulness. "We won't die of hunger and cold, anyway, and if you'll all chase yourselves, I think we can get reasonably dry into the bargain. Cheer up!" He knelt and unstrapped the tents.

"The very first thing to do is to get these up," he said. "Clear away those old beds and see if the ground is any drier under them.

"All right," he said a moment later. "We'll run the tents right up on the old sites."

Under his energetic leadership the camp

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began to take form quickly. When the tents were well under way, he turned his attention to a fire, rightly judging that a big blaze would cheer the spirits of the company. It took some time to find a birch tree and more to find a rotten tree from which he could hope to secure some dry punk, but once his search was successful, the operation of starting the fire was speedily accomplished. Then as the first flames shot up he piled on the top of a dead balsam and shortly the four voyagers had dropped all other work and were bringing their “goose-flesh” back to a normal condition before the crackling blaze, which sent a shower of sparks heavenward.

Bob allowed but a moment of this relaxation. “Get to work, you lazy beggars,” he said, “if you want any comfort to-night. Scatter and get me some wood. That’s the first thing, or this fire will be out.”

“How about balsam boughs?” asked Benson as he seized an axe.

“No use getting them to-night. We will be drier on the bare ground. Just get firewood. Lots of it!”

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In a few moments the forest resounded with the blows of steel on wood, and Macklin shortly arrived with some logs and the cheering news that the sky was clearing in the west.

"Bully," said Bob, who was nursing his fire along, the balsam top having died down to a few embers. "Hurry and split those logs."

Bob was prodigal with his wood and kept sending the others back for more until he had his fire piled high and a big supply at his side.

"Feel warmer?" he asked Foster as the latter dropped an armful of fuel beside him.

"You bet!"

"Open up the packs, then, and get me out some erbswurst.¹ Then you had better get into some dry clothes."

Bob set a pot on to boil, crumbled up the erbswurst and dropped it in.

"What's that stuff?" asked Benson as he added his contribution to the wood-pile.

"Erbswurst. I thought the sooner we got something hot inside of us, the better. And this is the quickest. Makes a thick soup."

¹ German army ration : pea-meal sausage.

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“ Fine,” agreed Benson, sniffing at the pot.
“ Hurry it along.”

The others stripped to the skin and rubbed dry while Bob stirred the soup.

“ Hurry and finish your dressing, Mack,” he called after a moment. “ Take a hand at this while I change. The rain has stopped.”

Two platefuls apiece of the steaming soup put new life into them all.

“ Gee, that’s good,” volunteered Foster as he scraped his plate. “ I really feel warm again,” and he stretched himself out on the blankets.

“ Here, move over ! ” said Benson. “ Give me some room.”

They lay silent for some time, exulting in the glorious fact that the Chienne was passed and that for a week they were to be free of the tump-line. Suddenly in the gathering gloom a rosy light penetrated the tent. Bob jumped up and looked out.

“ The storm is over, fellows,” he exclaimed.
“ Come out and look at the sunset.”

Overhead still hung a thick blanket of moist clouds, but to the west was a broad band of

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clear sky tinged with pink, while low down on the horizon a mass of fire twinkled through the trees and gave promise of clear weather. The little clearing in which they stood shone with a myriad points of light as the rain-drops caught the sun's rays, and as Bob looked at his companions he saw smiles breaking through the masks of gloom which had covered their faces most of the day.

"We are going to have clear weather," he announced as he sniffed the breeze which stole through the trees and blew the fire smoke circling in low eddies. "The wind's coming out of the west."

For an hour they busied themselves 'round camp. Bob cut two notched sticks which he planted in the ground on either side of his fire, and then laid a pole across the notches on which to hang the pots. Pot-hangers he made by cutting half-inch sticks of varying lengths, and driving a nail in each end; one to hook over the cross-pole, the other to catch the pot-handle. Macklin meanwhile tightened the tent pegs while the others got out the blankets and made ready for the night.

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When Bob had his fireplace shipshape he raked his coals together and looked at them thoughtfully. Then he turned to the others with a twinkle in his eye.

“Fine bed of coals I have here,” he announced. “It seems a pity to waste them. Could any of you eat a small slice of nicely broiled bacon with some buckwheat cakes on the side? Don’t all speak at once.”

“Could I! Watch me!”

“Rather.”

“Great brain you have, Bob. I’m simply famished.”

“The idea apparently meets with approval,” said Bob laughing. “So here goes.”

He mixed his batter hurriedly, cut his bacon in large, generous slices and soon had the pan sizzling on the coals.

“One might suppose none of you had had a bite to eat for weeks,” he remarked as he looked around at the three faces which leaned toward the fire, sniffing ecstatically the oily odor of the bacon.

“I feel that way,” retorted Macklin, “and I’m not ashamed of it. I wouldn’t sell my hollow

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feeling for a diamond mine, now that I see what I am going to placate it with. Ah ! ”

The last exclamation was drawn forth by the splash of the buckwheat batter into the bacon grease. Bob had fished out the latter and placed it on a plate to keep warm.

“ Pretty fine, eh ? ” asked Bob, as he turned the cake over.

“ Bully ! ”

Bob made four cakes, each the size of the frying-pan. “ Not very professional,” he remarked, “ but it saves time.”

For a few moments nothing was heard but the slow grinding of four sets of teeth, and in a surprisingly short time four empty plates stared up at their owners.

“ Is that all ? ” asked Foster regretfully as he mopped up the last bit of grease with his cake.

“ Yes ! You glutton ! ” said Bob indignantly. “ We’ll have to put Joe on an allowance,” he added to the others. “ He’ll eat us out of house and home, otherwise.”

They sat on a log by the fire in silence after that, blissfully conscious of full stomachs, and watched the fire lick round the fresh wood

“HERE WE ARE”

Bob had thrown on, blaze up, and die down once more into a dull glow. At length one log, burnt through, fell with a crash and sent up a shower of sparks.

“We might as well turn in,” remarked Bob, rousing himself. “No more food to-night, Joe.”

The group scattered to examine the clothes hung by the fire to dry.

“Pretty wet still,” remarked Macklin critically as he examined his shirt.

“Take ’em in the tent with you, anyway,” advised Bob. “They’ll be covered with dew in the morning if you don’t. Whose boots are these?” he added as he stumbled over a pair lying near the fire.

“Mine,” said Foster. “Are they dry yet?”

“Dry?” ejaculated Bob. “For goodness sake never try to dry out a pair of shoe-packs. They’ll leak like a sieve if you do—to say nothing of cracking.” He looked at the boots critically. “My advice is to take ’em down and put ’em in the lake at once, or you won’t be able to get into them in the morning. They’ll be stiff as boards.”

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"But they are all wet inside," objected Foster.

"That won't hurt any. After you have soaked them well, turn them upside down on a stick like mine there. The insides will dry out."

After Foster had departed crestfallen with his boots, Bob cleared away the remains of their late supper, sent Benson to the lake for some drinking water, and then sat down in his tent.

"Pretty tired!" he admitted to Macklin's inquiry. "It's been a hard day. How does Joe pan out as a canoe mate?"

"Fair," said Macklin slowly. "He doesn't get on to things very quickly, though."

"No, I've noticed that. Tom sizes up better that way. There's good stuff in that boy."

"So there is in Foster," said Macklin springing to the defense of his protégé. "But just now he's too fat. The work comes harder on him."

"Yes," admitted Bob grudgingly. "He is fat. But somehow," he lowered his voice, "he

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doesn't seem to have the backbone he should. He is inclined to lie down under punishment.”

“ Oh,” protested Macklin, “ I think you are wrong. Remember he is new to this sort of work. You can't develop neck muscles in a day.”

“ Nor in a week, for that matter. I admit all that. I make allowance for it. But nevertheless ——” his voice died away.

“ Nevertheless what? You don't think he has a yellow streak, do you? ”

“ Oh, no! It's simply that he has not learnt to punish himself.”

“ Oh, he hasn't got the swing of the work yet. He's strong enough. Wait till he gets his fat off.”

“ Ssh ! ” said Bob. “ Here they come. Fix your boots? ” he called as a figure passed in front of the tent.

“ Yes ; I think they will be O. K. now,” said Foster, peering in. “ Gone to bed? ”

“ Just about. Where's that water? ”

“ Here you are,” said Tom, setting down the brimming pail. “ Fresh as fresh ! ”

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"Fine!" said Bob wiping his mouth and drawing a deep breath. "Have some, Mack?"

"What are the plans for to-morrow?" asked Benson.

"Take it easy," said Bob. "We must have some fish, though. You and Joe can attend to that. I thought I'd take a little trip down the river, perhaps, and look for game. But rest up, if you want to. We'll be here a week, and except for adding to the larder the only work will be around camp. I'll get the breakfast in the morning. Good-night."

When the others had gone Bob stepped out of his tent, and made up the fire for the night. He piled on a few logs, took a look around the camp, and returned to bed.

"Ready to turn in?" he asked.

"Yes, might as well."

Bob slipped off his moccasins, put on his sweater and rolled up in his blanket. For a time he lay with his hands under his head staring at the play of firelight on the trees. He felt warm and at peace. The thought of a hard day successfully overcome colored his thoughts. The lip-lap of the water on the

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shore below came faintly to him on the rising breeze. The noises of the forest were music to his drowsy ear, and he stretched himself in deep content.

“ Bully life ! Isn’t it ? ” he murmured to Macklin.

“ Gnorr-r-r ! ” was his only answer.

Macklin was asleep.

CHAPTER VIII

BENSON IN TROUBLE

THEY woke to a sun-bathed world. The fire was out ; the morning air was sharp, their blankets felt enticingly warm, and their overworked muscles gave warning of their condition by sundry aches and complete stiffness, but the call of the sun was sufficient to send Bob to his tent-flaps without grumbling. He kicked the fire together, put on the coffee, and tumbled back into bed to drowse till the water boiled.

The call of the hot drink was sufficient to bring out the others, and soon they were busy with their various duties.

"If you fellows are going fishing, you had better get started," advised Bob as they finished breakfast. "When the sun gets much higher you won't have any sport."

He and Macklin watched the others push off, and then turned to work getting balsam boughs for the beds.

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"Ground felt hard last night, didn't it?"

"Yes, rather; though to tell the truth I slept fairly well," returned Bob. "These will make it soft, however," he continued as he laced and interlaced layer after layer of the small fragrant boughs until the bed was a couple of feet thick. "There," he said rising from his knees, and surveying his work, "that will do for the present. To-morrow when those boughs have crushed down we can add as much more, and then we'll have a bed fit for a king."

The others meanwhile had paddled up to the little lake they had passed through the afternoon before, and landing on the sand-bar prepared to earn their lunch. Standing well back from the water's edge Benson made a cast. As his flies lit on the water, there was a swirl. He dimly saw a brown body just under the surface; he struck quickly, but was too late. His flies hopped aimlessly across the surface.

"Hard luck," said Foster who, rod in hand, had been watching.

The next cast was more successful. Ben-

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son's reel sang for an instant as the trout took the fly, but he soon had the fish under control and reeling in, netted him.

"Small!" he commented, holding the fish up. "About half a pound."

"Good eating, though."

"You bet."

"It looks as though the fish were here, anyway," remarked Foster as he prepared to cast.

"Right you are," said Tom a moment later, as he watched his companion's rod bending under the strain of a fighting fish. "That's a big one."

"A pound and a quarter, isn't it?" said Foster when the glistening fish hung from the scales.

"Yes, and a shade over. This is good fun!"

Luck was with them, and they spent a glorious morning. A cool breeze swept the point clear of black flies and other pests, and when Tom looked at his watch, prompted thereto by an empty feeling at his belt line, seventeen fish had been caught.

"That's enough, don't you think? It's

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eleven-thirty, and by the time we can get these on the fire, I'll be ready to eat them. How about it?"

Their arrival in camp was met with cheers from the others, and Bob pointed with pride to two partridges hanging from a tree.

"We haven't been idle either, you notice," he said. "I got them just down the trail a bit. We'll have them to-night after the fish course."

"That sounds good to me," said Benson. "Want me to pick 'em?"

That afternoon Bob took Tom with him on a hunting expedition. They struck off on an old trail which led down through a ravine to a caribou swamp some two miles from camp. As they descended the woods opened out and the spruce and maple gave way to a stunted growth of tamarack. At first growing in groves, as they proceeded the trees became scattered, and finally ceased altogether, leaving Tom looking at a long moss-covered swamp, treeless, except here and there a group of the dreary-looking tamarack.

The moss claimed his attention. In the

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mass it gave the effect of a soft dim color, but as he examined it he found it composed of green, red and yellow stalks, beautiful in color and structure. At every step his feet sank ankle deep, and as he proceeded further it became very moist until every deserted footprint held water.

"What is this stuff?" he asked.

"Caribou moss. This whole plain is covered with it. This was probably all a lake once, till it became choked with this stuff. We are practically walking on water."

"Ugh!" said Benson as he looked round the dreary expanse. "The idea gives me the shivers. Sort of bottomless pit idea."

"Exactly," said Bob. "I always have an eerie feeling myself when I'm here alone. The idea is in the back of my brain that the whole bottom may fall out some day and let me through."

"Where is camp from here?" asked his companion, staring around him at the hills which shut them in.

"Just about back of you. Off there to your left is the river which flows out of our lake.

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Straight ahead about a half mile beyond the end of the swamp is another big lake. You might go over there to-morrow if you like."

They walked some distance along the fringe of trees bordering the swamp, keeping a look-out for possible signs of game.

"See," said Bob suddenly, pointing to a series of deep depressions in the moss crossing their route at right angles. "That's the track of a caribou."

"By heck! Is it, really? Passed lately, do you suppose?"

"No," said Bob. "The moss looks wilted. He must have crossed here twenty-four hours ago, at least."

"Do you suppose he is anywhere around here now?" Benson peered across the swamp.

"Not much chance of it. Caribou don't stay long in one spot. They keep moving. Well, let's get back. I want to freshen up the blazes¹ on the trail. We may be caught down here some night, and a fresh blaze is a comfort under those circumstances."

Benson was so inflamed by the sight of the

¹ Blaze—to mark a tree by cutting the bark.

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caribou track that he accompanied Bob eagerly the next morning when the latter suggested another trip to the swamp.

"The way the wind is makes it advisable to take the canoe this time and strike across from the river," said Bob as he made up two small packets of lunch.

They paddled for a mile or so and then Bob beached the canoe, and dragged it into the bushes.

"We'll walk across from here," he said leading the way.

When they reached the swamp they separated.

"You keep on to the lower end," said Bob generously. "I'll take the upper. There is more chance of game down there. If you don't see anything you might go over to the other lake, and try your luck." Bob consulted his watch. "It's nine o'clock now. I'll meet you here at five. We had better compare watches."

Benson strode off with his gun over his shoulder and Bob watched him till he was out of sight, waving to him once as he saw the

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distant figure look back. Then he started hunting his end of the swamp in a workman-like manner.

Tom meanwhile plodded along through the wearying moss. Every hundred yards or so he stopped and took a long look around the swamp, hoping against hope that he would catch a glimpse of game. Tracks were plentiful, but that was all, though more than once a dark object on the edge of the forest caused his heart to jump; but on closer inspection the object invariably turned out to be a rotting stump or merely the play of light and shade on the trees.

When he had covered two miles the tamaracks thickened; gradually the broad expanse of swamp narrowed down to nothing, and he realized he had reached his hunting ground. For a couple of hours he patrolled his beat, but no sign of game gladdened his vigil.

The black flies were tormenting, biting him in the most unexpected places, until his patience was nearly worn through. He had early tied his handkerchief round his neck and lower face, but the pests perched on his

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cheek bones and ate their fill, new recruits constantly taking the places of the ones he slaughtered.

"Not much fun in this," he confessed to himself. "I think I'll go on to the lake. It will be more amusing to keep moving."

The day had clouded over so that once committed to the forest he found himself in a dim light, in strong contrast to the bright reflections on the swamp. The going was not difficult, even though he was following no trail, for the trees were open, and there was little underbrush. It was a relief to be walking once more on solid ground, away from the constant drag of the moss, and he walked cheerfully on, enjoying himself immensely, and expecting momentarily to come upon the lake.

Suddenly it struck across his mind that he had walked much more than half a mile, and that he should have reached the lake before this. The idea startled him, but he kept on, peering ahead for the first glimpse of water. At the end of ten minutes he stopped. He began to be worried. He could hardly have passed such a lake as Bob had described without

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knowing it ; and yet where was it ? On all sides stretched unbroken lines of trees. He began bearing more to his right, then mistrusting his first judgment bore to the left. Then he stopped. He suddenly realized that he did not know from which direction he had come. The trees could tell him nothing. He was lost !

For a moment panic seized him. He was filled with a desire to run—blindly—anywhere, and he made a few quick steps. Then his common sense reasserted itself and he forced himself to sit down and think it out. At first he could not control his thoughts. The one idea that he was lost—alone in the wilderness—kept hammering in his brain, and drove away all consecutive reasoning. At last he decided to climb a tree and look for the swamp. Choosing the largest near him, he endeavored to reach its top. With much effort he dragged himself up the stiff branches, but could not reach a position high enough to see anything but the tops of the hills which seemed to surround him on all sides, and none bore the stamp of familiarity. Disheartened,

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he slid down and reconsidered the situation.

"Let's see," he said. "The swamp lies south of camp, and runs about north and south itself. This lake I am looking for is south of the swamp. That's right, I am sure."

He said this with an air of finality that he was very far from feeling. The conclusion he had arrived at seemed simple, but he had reasoned thus far only by taking a tight grip on himself, forcing his brain, which swung back again and again to the fatally possessing thought that he was lost, was lost, to grapple with the, to him, illusive problem that two and two make four; that if his steps had led south, he had but to go north to arrive at his starting point.

Having once arrived at this conclusion, though to his rioting brain its correctness seemed far from certain, he nailed it down as something to cling to.

"There," he said, driving a stick in the ground, "that's camp. North from here. Here's the swamp," another stick. "Here's the darned lake. I must be somewhere in



HE SUCCEEDED IN TOUCHING IT

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between these two. All I have to do is to walk back to stick number two. That seems easy." He had acquired a fair degree of absorption over his diagram, but the instant he looked up and saw the unfriendly trees shutting him in, panic seized him once more.

"I want to go north! But which is north?"

Failing a compass he had to rely on the sun. He looked up. A thick blanket of clouds obscured the sky and he found it impossible to locate.

"It's twelve-thirty," he said, consulting his watch. "I'm certainly up against it. Even if I could see the sun it would be almost overhead and not much help."

Waiting for a rift in the clouds he blazed the tree against which he was sitting on all sides, so as to make sure of his starting point. The clouds moved sluggishly, at times opening as though to give him the help he needed, but always closing again, as though playing with his misfortune. At length, for a moment, a bright spot shone overhead and, determined to wait no longer, he took it for

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his guide. Instantly he made a second blaze on what he took to be the north side of the tree.

“The sun must be past the meridian. I’ll keep it on my left shoulder and walk straight ahead.”

This was easier said than done. The nature of the forest necessitated a continual *détour* to avoid some windfall or thick undergrowth, and he could never feel sure as he straightened out after each bend that he had allowed enough for his offset. The sun too was only occasionally a help, and the patch of brightness which he endeavored to keep on his left seemed continually to move about.

But he set his face doggedly ahead, shifting his rifle from shoulder to shoulder as it grew irksome, and trying to buoy up his mind with the pleasant thought that his packet of lunch remained still untouched and that its sustaining force was still his to call upon. He felt tired. Not that he had walked far, but the discomfort of his position, he refused to call it peril as yet, seemed to sap his strength and make the effort of walking a real one.

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Once he passed through a slashing, where lumbermen had at some time been at work, and the rotting trunks and discarded tops of the timber made walking difficult. He hated that slashing, for when its presence had been recognized by the increase of light just ahead, he had mistaken it for the beginnings of the swamp, and had rushed ahead only to find himself standing in an opening of a few acres, and the forest still hemming him in from its further side.

But he swallowed this disappointment, and made the best of a bad bargain by sitting down and eating a small portion of his lunch. When the last bit of a slice of bacon slipped down his throat, he looked longingly at the second and last, but wisely put it back in his pocket.

“I’ll need that later, maybe.”

Refreshed, he continued his march. At times, when the apparent endlessness of his chosen course got on his nerves, he would cry out to himself that he was all wrong, he must be wrong, that it was south he should go, not north, or again, that camp did lie to the

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north, but that he had mistaken the sun, and was marching south. But through it all, he restrained these impulses, and kept to his chosen way.

More than once, after one of these periodical outbursts, he found himself running; and he had to stop short and rest a moment before he could resume his way at an orderly walk. Then the loneliness of the forest oppressed him. The silence seemed peopled, and he would catch himself looking furtively over his shoulder, as though to surprise some possible face that looked at him from the leafy undergrowth.

To cure this, Tom began to sing, and for a time his voice drove back the encroaching eeriness of the forest and cleared a space around him in which he could draw an easier breath, but then the forest seemed to take up his song and send it back to him with a sinister note and it no longer comforted him, so he stopped.

Once he took himself to task for these fancies. "The idea of you, a big hulking brute of a man, with a rifle, matches, food and a

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knife getting in a panic like this. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. A nice opinion Walters would have of you. You who hope to make the Warrington 'Varsity !”

His scorn of himself did some good, and as he walked he continued in the same vein, reviling his cowardice and holding his conduct up to ridicule.

“ You a football player ! Why, Walters will set you to playing tiddle-de-winks !” and he laughed.

It was a good hearty laugh, for he was getting control of himself, but at the end his nerves betrayed him, for his guffaw ran up into a shrill squeak and at once his old terrors returned. He shook himself and hurried on.

Suddenly the comparative twilight in which he was walking lightened, his heart gave a bound of relief ; he rushed ahead and came out not upon the swamp or even the lake, but upon a stream which ran noisily over some rocks and seemed with its music to mock his disappointment.

CHAPTER IX

OUT OF THE WOODS

HE had felt so sure this time that his troubles were over that he stood for a moment stunned and then sank down upon the bank, the last remnant of his self-possession stripped from him.

After a period he roused himself, for it was not his nature to give up until he had exhausted every possible means of escape. He walked down to the stream and took a long, satisfying drink, splashing the water over his head and neck and feeling much refreshed by such treatment, was able to return to his seat, and with a clear brain weigh the value of this last encounter.

Certainly, he was in no worse plight than before he caught sight of the light through the trees. Here at least was water, and properly used not only a thirst-quencher but a guide to lead him out of this maze of forest

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and put him once more in the midst of his friends.

Properly used! Yes, that was both the solution and the problem. For just as surely as the stream could lead him to familiar surroundings so could it lead away, and for the solving of this problem he fell to drawing diagrams in the earth. The sun could not help him here, for the course of the stream seemed to be east and west.

This stream was either the Chienne or a stream feeding the lake for which he looked and in the looking had become lost. Yet, again, it might be the outlet of that lake, and these three possibilities he debated at length.

If it were the Chienne, he had but to follow up-stream to come upon the canoe they had left that morning in the bushes. That was clear! But there remained the "if," so he considered the other possibilities.

If it was the outlet of the lake and it joined the Chienne, he must follow down-stream to the junction and then up-stream. If it were the inlet, but no—on second thoughts it could not be. It was too wide a stream for that.

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So he wiped out possibility number three and set to consider the other two anew.

If he followed down-stream, the best he could do would be to find the Chienne, and the streams might never join. If he followed up-stream he might reach the lake or the canoe, either of which would be satisfactory.

"That settles it," he said and with another drink, and settling his hat well on his head turned resolutely up-stream.

At every bend he came to his eyes sought eagerly for a sight of the little cove and sandy beach upon which he had landed, or failing that, the broad expanse of lake which would give to him his direction.

The stream twisted and turned to all points of the compass, and bend after bend was passed without yielding to his wish; but the merry waters beside him were companionable, and the panic of the forest no longer assailed him, though his inner consciousness knew that it was stalking always at his elbow ready to again possess him if the bulwark of confidence within which he was now

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secure should yield through a faltering spirit.

His rifle grew heavier and heavier; the brambles which grew along the bank tore at his clothes and scratched his face, but he dared not leave the side of the stream, for fear that in its twistings it would escape him. At times he would be level with the stream's surface, at times raised many feet above, and it was while pushing stubbornly up the side of one of these inclines that he had his first moment of hope. Surely that headland was familiar; that point of land stuck out ahead with the lone tree upon it! He quickened his pace until the whole extent of the stream was visible. Then he sank down comfortably on the grass and looked and looked. There was the little cove; there the beach and, best of all, there was the bow of the canoe peeping out of the bushes. It was the Chienne after all!

After he had looked his fill at the welcome sight he went down to the canoe and could not refrain from patting it affectionately.

"It's nice to see you again, old girl," he

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said half humorously, half in earnest. "A while back I thought we were going to part company."

It was astonishing how the mere touch of a familiar object brought back his confidence. He looked at his watch. It was half-past two.

"Only two hours," he thought. "I feel as if I had been lost a year. But there is no use in sitting here. I might as well go back to the swamp and get some shooting."

Accordingly he started out again on the dim trail he had traversed in the morning. But as he approached the swamp he got to thinking. "If I keep on straight, Bob may mistake me for a caribou, or I may scare one that he is stalking. I had better turn at right angles, walk parallel for a bit and then cut in to where I was this morning."

He made his turn, watching carefully the sun, which was now plainly visible, and trudged ahead. Twenty minutes' walk he thought sufficient, and then turned again at right angles and headed for the swamp.

"I had better go cautiously along here,"

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he thought ; " I may run into some game any moment."

So with rifle slung in the hollow of his arm, ready for an emergency, he stole softly through the woods, peering ahead so far as the trees allowed, and thoroughly absorbed in his work. Not so absorbed, however, but that he stole frequent glances at the sun to make sure that he was holding the correct course. This was made the easier, in that his direction lay west and the sun was sufficiently low to make an upward glance hardly necessary.

He continued his hunt for game, until the thought crossed his mind, unusually receptive to the idea in view of his recent experience, that even allowing for the slow pace he had maintained since making his last turn, he should before this have arrived at the swamp.

The idea once born grew into a conviction, and though he did not suffer the panic of midday, he felt an uneasiness rising within him, that he had once again mislaid this elusive swamp.

" Confound the thing," he said, his anger growing that he should prove such a poor

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woodsman. "I'll very soon come to the conclusion that there is no swamp." Determined not to give in, he pushed ahead, and soon came to a dead halt, his abrupt movement being caused by his arrival upon the edge of the very slashing he had crossed during his earlier wanderings.

"I must be bewitched!" he stammered. "How in the name of common sense can I have reached this place again!"

He consulted his watch. "Lots of daylight yet," he said stepping forward determinedly. "I'm going to keep on till I get somewhere!"

His determination was rewarded. Within a quarter of a mile he stepped out upon the shore of a circular lake, a mile in diameter, or so he judged, measuring the span of wind-swept water that met his eye.

"This must be the lake," he said with satisfaction, and sitting down upon a fallen tree he celebrated his victory by eating the remains of his lunch. The first taste of food made him realize how hungry he was, and the meager supply melted before his attack

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in a way which left him very soon staring at an empty larder.

"Gee, that was good," he said drawing a deep breath of satisfaction and carefully licking each finger in turn that no stray crumb should fail to do its duty toward replenishing his void. "I wish I had some more."

He strolled along the curving beach for some distance, looking for tracks of possible game, but his search was unrewarded; so seeing that the sun had begun to dip toward the horizon, he retraced his steps and plunged once more into the forest in the direction which he now knew was north. The rays of the sun no longer could keep at bay the approaching forest twilight and it was through a dim array of trees that he passed. There was no mistaking the shadows, however, in the more open spaces, and keeping at right angles to their length, he soon passed over the half mile which separated him from the swamp.

"Well, you really are there after all," was his greeting as he stepped through the last fringe of tamarack and stood ankle-deep in

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the moss, looking down the long expanse of swamp. "I fear it was my fault after all. I apologize!" And with a light heart though weary feet he started for the place where he was to meet Bob. It was a long walk, however, and he had plenty of time to turn over in his mind the events of the day, but the only conclusion he had reached when he made out Bob's figure in the distance was, "I'm blessed if I know where I went wrong, even now!"

"Any luck?" Bob's voice came to him across the swamp, and it was good to hear again.

He waved an arm in answer.

"Didn't see a thing!" he said as he came nearer. "Did you?"

Bob shook his head. "Lots of tracks, but not a sign of the animal himself. None of the tracks were very fresh," he added.

"I suppose we might as well start for home," said Benson.

"Yes. Tired?"

"Pretty well tuckered," was Tom's response.

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"Did you go down to the lake?" Bob asked later, as they were threading their way toward the Chienne.

"Yes, I did. Didn't see anything, though."

Something in Tom's voice caused Bob to look back at him over his shoulder.

"Have any adventures?" he asked casually.

"Got lost."

"Lost!" Bob's tone expressed his surprise. "How did that happen?"

"Don't know, I'm sure. But I got lost all right. Found myself and then went and did the whole business over again. Oh, yes, I got lost, all right," and he related to Bob his wanderings.

"I don't see yet where I went wrong the second time," he finished. "I kept too far to the left the first time, I know that. But how I missed the swamp coming across here, I can't make out, unless it is that I am naturally a poor woodsman."

"You say you left the canoe, walked two-thirds of the way across, and then turned at right angles?"

"Yes."

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"Right angles to what?"

"To my first direction, of course."

"That explains it," said Bob, who had been puzzled himself for a moment.

"How?" Tom was still in the dark.

"Why, you took it for granted that the swamp is parallel to the Chienne. It isn't. It lies at an angle of almost forty-five degrees. So when you made that turn at right angles ——"

"I was veering away from the swamp all the time," broke in Tom excitedly.

"Exactly. And then when you turned again you walked right by the end of the swamp without knowing it."

"I see!" said Tom, a light breaking on his mind. "Well, that's a relief, anyway!" he added.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, I have been thinking all this time that I couldn't steer a straight course, when it was really the fault of the swamp for not being where it ought to have been."

Bob laughed. "That's one way of looking at it," he said.

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The paddle up-stream in the fast growing twilight was very pleasant. It was a relief to both to give their legs a rest and transfer their energy to their arms, so the canoe shot forward at a good pace, and soon the lake opened before them, with a twinkle of fire-light on the further bank giving promise of warm food and a soft bed.

As the others heard the canoe grate upon the shingle of the beach, they rushed down to hear the news, and were disappointed to learn of the non-success of the hunters.

"That's too bad," said Macklin. "We fished and went after partridges, but had very little luck. Only three trout and no birds. We won't have much of a supper."

"Is it ready?" asked Bob. "I'm famished."

"Yes, just about. Foster has made some biscuits, and I was just putting the trout on the fire when we heard you."

"Well, put 'em on, then. You can't get them cooked too soon to suit me," and Bob sat down in his tent and began pulling off his boots. "Gee, but I'm tired," he said.

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"Did you see any tracks?" asked Macklin when they were deep in the problem of supper.

"Yes, a good many. But I patrolled that old swamp religiously for seven hours and didn't see horn nor hide."

"Were you at the upper end?"

"Yes. Tom took the lower and managed to get lost twice in the same place," and Bob chuckled.

"Twice in the same place?" chorused the others. "Tell us about it."

So Tom for the second time related his experience, and when he came to his later encounter with the slashing and consequent bewilderment, Foster could not forbear teasing him.

"Nice woodsman you must be. What was there to be scared about, anyway? You ought to have kept your head."

"That's all very well," said Tom. "It's easy enough to talk when you're safe in camp. But you try it alone. I know I lost my head ——"

"I should say you did," interrupted Foster.

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"I'm not so sure," said Bob, helping himself to one of Foster's biscuits. "There's no shame in getting lost. The best woodsman does that at times. The test is to think the situation out. I think Tom kept his head mighty well, and showed pretty good grit."

Bob turned again to his supper. Then as he bit into the biscuit:

"At all events he showed that his courage wasn't of the half-baked sort, Joe," he added with a grin, "like these biscuits of yours."

CHAPTER X

MOOSE !

SEVERAL days passed, and their hunting brought no results, though at least two of them spent the daylight hours on the swamp, and let no weariness of spirit interfere with a thorough performance of that duty. Bob began to take stock of his provisions with an anxious eye. The fishing had proved a disappointment; seldom were enough trout killed in a day to provide for more than one meal, and as partridges were equally scarce, the bacon and flour had had to bear the brunt of the voracious appetites engendered by their healthy life. As Bob had outfitted with the expectation of getting game quickly, as indeed he was forced to do, seeing that there was a limit to the burden the most willing back could bear, these unexpected inroads on the larder had reduced the supply of staples to a low ebb.

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"If we don't get game soon," he announced one night at supper, when Foster was complaining that he was still hungry, "I shall have to cut down your rations."

A howl of protest greeted the words.

"Cut 'em down? Why, they have reached the vanishing point already."

"I have taken up my belt two holes," said Foster.

"Have you?" retorted Bob, with an exaggerated air of interest. "Just listen, Mack. We've taken two inches off Joe's waist-line already. Why, if this keeps up, we'll have him in first-class shape before we get home. That's good work," he said turning again to Foster. "Restrain your appetite, and you'll get rid of all that fat without trouble."

The others laughed.

"'Nobody loves a fat man,'" quoted Macklin with a grin. "You won't get any sympathy here."

"But," Bob went on, becoming serious again, "things are beginning to look bad. We can't stay on here till everything is eaten up. Remember, we have a four or five days'

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journey ahead of us. At the rate we are eating now we will have to start home in a couple of days, or else put some restraint on our appetites."

"You're the boss," said Macklin. "I'll back you up in whatever you decide to do."

"Well, then, beginning with to-morrow don't complain if you leave the table hungry. I'm going to put on the screws."

Foster's dreams that night were of food, which continually being placed before him in appetizing array was as invariably snatched from his grasp as he was about to taste of it. He was awakened from such an unsatisfactory situation by hearing Macklin's voice calling:

"What has become of Bob? Does any one know?"

"Why, isn't he in his tent?" asked Benson coming out of his.

"No. Vanished. I didn't hear him leave, either."

"What time is it?"

"Just after six. Hello, his rifle is gone," added Macklin, who was rummaging in the tent. "Must have gone hunting."

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"He evidently is getting hungry," remarked Foster sleepily from his blankets.

"It won't be your fault if we don't all go hungry, you lazy beggar," retorted Macklin. "Get up and do some work."

"Oh, what's the hurry? I'm very comfortable."

Out of patience, Macklin seized a pail and started for the lake accompanied by Benson.

"Hope Bob gets something," the latter remarked as he squatted down on the shore and began washing his face.

"Same here. I'd hate to leave before our time is up. What's that?"

The exclamation was caused by the sound of a rifle in the distance, somewhere on the Chienne, the report traveling clearly over the water.

They both listened intently. "He got him," said Macklin with conviction, "or we would hear another shot."

The words had barely cleared his lips when four more shots rang out, slowly and methodically as though the marksman were shooting at a target. Then silence.

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"Missed him," said Macklin disgustedly.

Bob had formed the plan over night to get up early, before daylight, and, taking a canoe, drift slowly down the Chienne, on the chance of coming on some game at dawn. Having the faculty of making his mind its own alarm-clock, he had been enabled to creep out of the tent without awaking Macklin. His dressing consisted of pulling on his boots, for the night being cold he had clad himself in every garment he possessed before sleeping. He picked up his rifle, and stole softly down to the lake, filling his magazine as he went.

Sitting in the stern, having placed a large stone in the bow to balance his weight, he sent the canoe gliding softly over the mirrored waters with long, silent strokes. As he neared the outlet the current took him, so stopping the paddling, he contented himself with an occasional stroke to keep his craft straight.

Thus he drifted on, an occasional lily-pad brushing harshly against the canoe or the plop of an alarmed frog diving from his green chair to safety being the only sounds that broke the silence.



HE LOOKED IMMENSE

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Bob went down the stream for two miles or more, and then as the sky was well alight with the coming dawn, turned back, disgusted with his non-success, for he had set his heart upon surprising the camp with some fresh meat.

He had covered but a short distance when he entered upon that part of the stream which, widening, formed the little cove where he was accustomed to leave his canoe, and there upon the low lying point, by the lone tree which had told Benson of his safety, stood a bull moose.

Bob was too far off, two hundred yards or more, to judge accurately of the animal's size, but in the half light he looked immense; his black bulk losing its outlines against the somber trees. Once Bob made sure of the presence of antlers he wasted no time in debating their size. It was meat he was after now and not a trophy, and there was no question that the animal before him would supply all the steaks they could eat, and more.

The wind was fortunately quartering from his quarry to him, and he at once drove the

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canoe up-stream, hoping to get within easy range before the moose discovered him. This was the more important as a quick glance at either shore showed him that he would have to shoot from the canoe, the lay of the land making it impractical to get a shot from the bank.

In hoping to remain undiscovered, he was disappointed, for he had not covered twenty yards when the moose, which up to this time had been broadside to him, shifted uneasily for a moment and then turned and faced him.

Bob held his breath and remained motionless for a long moment till the moose swung his head. Bob seized the opportunity to make half a dozen quick but silent strokes. Then he laid down the paddle and reached for his rifle.

The instant he loosed control of the canoe, the wind and current took charge, bearing him slowly backward and turning the canoe on its axis. This made shooting difficult, but taking the best aim he could he fired. The moose hunched its shoulders but did not move. Again he fired and the moose after a

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long stare moved slowly off toward the forest, stopping at intervals to take another look at this intruder who belched fireworks. His broadside now gave Bob a better chance, and aiming quickly at the shoulder he again pulled the trigger. The moose continued his orderly way to cover.

Disgusted, Bob seized his paddle, and bringing the canoe round paddled vigorously toward the point. The moose broke into a trot as the sound reached him, and in despair Bob took another shot; then, just as the moose disappeared in the trees, fired his last cartridge. As the echoes of the report died away he heard the moose moving behind the leafy screen, but pursuit was hopeless, and he dropped his useless rifle with a malediction.

"I must have touched him that time; he hunched up. I couldn't miss him clean five times!"

Without ammunition, however, there was no more to be done and with many a backward glance of regret at the spot where he last saw the moose he paddled toward camp.

"If I had only taken Mack with me to

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handle the canoe," he thought, "I would have killed him," in which indeed there was some grain of truth, for the drifting of the canoe had been a heavy handicap to a true aim.

It was with a heavy heart he saw his friends lined up on the beach waiting his arrival. He tried to soften the blow of his non-success while still some way distant by a disconsolate shake of the head, but either they misunderstood him or refused to allow their hope to die, for Macklin hailed him with, "Where is he?"

Bob drove the canoe ashore with a vicious stroke, and said, "Missed him."

"What was the trouble?"

"Oh, I don't know. Bad shooting, I suppose. The canoe was drifting, but I should have gotten him, anyway. Is breakfast ready?"

"Big one?" persisted Macklin anxious to hear the particulars even though the fresh meat was probably by now miles away in the forest.

"Fair sized bull moose. Couldn't gauge his spread very well."

MOOSE!

"Moose?" ejaculated Macklin. "I didn't know that there were any 'round here."

"Neither did I," said Bob. "I was much surprised when I saw him. Caribou and moose won't stay in the same country. But I suppose that explains our non-success. Caribou are moving out; moose are moving in. That often happens. But it is the first moose I have ever seen in this country."

"Too bad you missed him," said Foster.

"Yes, Joe. I'm mighty sorry for your sake. I wanted to save you the pain of half rations if possible. But there is always the silver lining. Remember your waist line!"

Bob was unusually thoughtful during breakfast, and when he had finished called Macklin aside.

"Do you want to go down there and look the place over?" he asked. "I somehow feel sure I wounded him, and it might be possible to track him down. Get your gun."

They disembarked on the point and Bob led the way to where he had first seen the moose.

"It was just about here. Yes, here's his mark. By Jove, I was right!"

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Macklin hurried to where Bob was standing pointing triumphantly to something at his feet which the grass hid from the former's gaze.

"Blood, by heck!" said Macklin, much excited. "And quite a lot of it. Let's track it out."

They took the trail, and for some yards had no difficulty in following it through the trampled grass, though there was no further sign of blood. But as they proceeded the ground became torn up by a multitude of tracks pointing in all directions, which effectually prevented any further reading of the trail. They were by this time near the edge of the woods, and feeling that time was valuable, Bob suggested separating.

"You go down a bit, while I go up. Walk a bit into the woods and see if you can cut his trail. I'll do the same."

With his rifle ready for quick action, for a wounded moose is no enemy to encounter unprepared, Bob made the little *détour* he had suggested and entered the forest. The mold covered floor of the woods was destitute of tracks, and he moved along cautiously, study-

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ing the ground and at the same time keeping a wary lookout for the animal itself. Soon he heard a crackling ahead of him, and he stopped to listen, but it was only Macklin, who had stepped on a dried stick and now came into view.

"Nothing doing, I'm afraid," said Bob in a low tone as he joined his companion, but at the very word, a snort, a very bellow of rage, sounded in his ear and turning quickly he confronted the immense form of the moose, not twenty feet away, rising from behind a bush, with bloodshot eyes, bristling mane, and looking, as Macklin described it afterward, "like the very old boy himself."

The distance was too short to miss, and Bob's shot rang out almost before he had completed his turn. A moment later, Macklin, whom the unexpected sight had paralyzed for an instant, also fired, and the huge creature sank down once more behind his protecting bush.

Bob had instantly thrown another shell into the barrel and now advanced step by step, ready to fire again if necessary. But the

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two bullets had done their work. The moose was dead.

They shook hands excitedly. "Weren't you scared for a moment? I was."

"You bet. Scared to death!"

"But we've got him."

"We sure have."

"Eats at last!"

When the first transport of pleasure had died down, Bob examined the body to see the effect of his shots.

"These two are the ones we just fired," he said pointing to two bullet holes in the neck and shoulder. "And this one, which has bled so freely, must be my first shot when he hunched himself. There was nothing vital about it, though. I wonder what shot crippled him."

He searched the hide carefully, but not until he came to the hind quarters did he find the answer.

"See, Mack, here right by the tail. It must have been my last shot, just as he was going in the woods. The bullet must have ranged right through him."

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"Lucky shot," commented Macklin.

"It sure was," and Bob stood admiring the black coat. "Not much of a head," he said critically; "pretty small; in fact, won't run forty inches. But," and Bob laid emphasis on the word, "he represents food! You paddle back and get the others, Mack; bring the axes with you, and I'll wait here and make a start in getting off the hide."

Then as Frank pushed off he called after him:

"Tell Foster that I'll fill his little tummy full to-night with moose steak smothered in onions. Don't forget that—moose steak smothered in onions—and he will come with you on the run."

CHAPTER XI

FOSTER FILLS UP

"HE's a beauty, isn't he?"

"Just look at his chin whiskers!"

"That is generally termed a bell."

"What, this thing?" said Foster, taking hold of the growth which hung from the lower jaw.

"Yes. It's a good one, too. Must be a foot long."

The four friends were gathered round the carcass, Macklin having found the others in camp, and hurried them back to the scene of victory. True to Bob's prophecy, Foster led the others in eagerness. The size of the animal as he lay huddled in the underbrush was a revelation to the novices, and his weight, when under Bob's direction they endeavored to turn him over to facilitate skinning, was no less so.

When left alone by Macklin's departure for

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camp, Bob's first act had been to bleed the moose by thrusting his knife upward just in front of the breastbone and giving it a sharp twist, thus cutting the main blood vessels. Then he made a cut through the hide at this point, and carried it up over the shoulder to the backbone, thus severing the head-skin from the rest of the hide on the side uppermost. Then, with difficulty, for the hide was tremendously thick and tough, he made a cut down the inside of each leg and along the belly. Then cutting the legs off at the knee-joint he began prying the skin from the body with clenched fist, using his knife only where the hide refused to come away.

He was engaged in this work when the others arrived, and then with their help the work went on more speedily.

Bob's first operation was to remove the head, which he did by cutting through to the backbone and severing the vertebræ nearest the skull with the axe; the rest was easy.

"This is about all I can do now until we get him turned over," said Bob wiping the

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sweat from his forehead with an equally moist forearm. "You two get hold of his hind leg while Tom and I take the front one. Are you ready? Now, all together."

They gave a strong heave. For a moment the moose refused to budge, then his great bulk began to turn. Grunting, pulling, they had almost persuaded the body to turn over when Foster lost his footing, seemed unable to regain it, and loosed his hold. The others, taken at a disadvantage, were unable to adjust themselves to the extra work, and the moose subsided into its original position.

"Confound you, Joe! What did you have to slip for?" asked Macklin wrathfully as he stood up breathing heavily. "Couldn't you have held on?"

Bob said nothing, but stood considering.

"Take a half hitch round that hind leg," he said, "with this thong, and then carry it round that tree. Then we can keep what we gain. Stand by now, Tom."

The other three lifted the moose, and Tom, taking a turn round the tree, held the advantage gained.

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"Now again! That's the way. Once more. Steady there! There she goes!"

Bob's voice rose in triumph as the carcass wavered a moment and then toppled over on the other side.

"That's good!" he said, and began afresh on the hide.

That finished at last he began with the aid of an axe to butcher the carcass.

The haunches and sirloins were quickly secured, but the liver, which on Foster's pleading Bob agreed to keep, took some getting at, and the sun announced midday before Bob had finished.

"I'm glad that's done," he said with relief as the meat was placed in the canoe. "I'll skin the head in camp."

After lunch, for which their morning's work had provided ravenous appetites, Bob set to work on skinning out the head, while the others went fishing.

"Don't forget that steak you promised me," said Foster as he picked up his rod.

"No, indeed. If you get some fish we can have a course dinner."

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“Fine!”

Foster smacked his lips and departed.

Bob first hung the head up at a convenient height, and then cut round the base of the antlers. He then stripped the skin carefully off the skull, taking pains not to cut the thin membrane of the eyelids and lips. This was a delicate job, and he took his time over it, making sure that each stroke of the knife was true, for a slip would have been disastrous. When the skin was severed from the skull he dissected the ears, which he had cut off close to the skull, then, leaving the skin turned inside out, he rubbed it liberally with salt, and hung it in the shade to dry.

The next step was to stretch the hide, which with Macklin's help he did, the latter having stayed in camp for the purpose. They accomplished this by lacing the edge with cord and fastening it between two saplings, the spring of the latter helping to hold the hide taut. Then Bob went over the whole surface carefully with his knife, cutting away all flesh and fat which the original hurried skinning had left adhering to it. The stretching of the

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hide made this task easier. Then the salt again, which he rubbed in with plenty of "elbow grease," after which he loosened the thongs and left the hide hanging, spread out but loose.

The skull next claimed his attention. All the flesh had to be cut away, and the brains removed.

"Can I help you any further, Bob?" Macklin asked as he watched the last process.

"No, I think not. Why?"

"I thought I would take a stroll and try to pick up a partridge or two."

"Good idea. Run along. I can finish this alone, all right."

Taking a small stick he worked it round in the brain cavity until he had broken up the contents, and then with the aid of some water washed them out.

"There," he said, "that's finished, thank goodness." And he went down to the lake, stripped himself to the waist and washed off the plentiful marks of his labors.

"I might as well start getting supper ready," he thought, looking at the sun.

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"They'll be back soon, and clamoring for food."

He had just mixed the batter for a large johnny-cake when Macklin returned in great glee with seven partridges.

"Cæsar's ghost! Where did you get that bunch?" exclaimed Bob, nearly dropping the mixing pan in his surprise.

"Pretty fine, eh!" said Macklin, holding them up. "Fat as butter, all of 'em. Ran right into 'em on the trail not half a mile from here. The first four were easy, but the others scattered a bit, and it took some hunting to spot them."

"They are nice birds," agreed Bob examining them. "Shall we have them for supper?"

"Sure!"

"Get to work then, and pick them. Go off in the woods a bit, so the feathers won't get over everything."

"Here come the others," he remarked a little later, as he poured the batter into the baking pan and set it aside. "Any luck?"

"Best yet!" shouted Foster. "Look what

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I brought you for supper." And he held up a string of trout—a dozen or more.

"Never saw anything like it," he said. "They were just mad for the fly. I got two doubles and Tom got a triple. All over a pound."

"Why didn't you bring more," said Macklin, "if they were so plentiful?"

"I wanted to," acknowledged Benson, "but Joe was afraid there would not be time to cook them for supper. So he would not wait."

"Well, Joe's appetite did him a good turn this time. That's quite enough, considering the meat we have in camp," broke in Bob in the midst of the laugh at Foster's expense. "We don't want to be game hogs."

"What have you got there, Mack?" asked Tom.

"Partridges."

"Partridges? We certainly are going to have a good dinner."

"It never rains but it pours," remarked Bob. "The mere idea of cooking all this food makes me ill!"

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"What are you going to give us?" asked Foster.

"Well," said Bob sitting down for a moment, "how about this? For a starter, I thought we would have the trout, fried. That will be your duty, Foster, since you caught them. Then moose steak, fried in its own grease on a very hot pan, and smothered in onions and a certain rich gravy I know how to make. Macaroni on the side. Then partridges—split and broiled, with bacon. For dessert apple sauce. Johnny-cake and coffee to go with each course. How does that sound?"

"You overpower me, Mr. Walters. This is too much!"

"A very tasty meal. It sounds good to me."

"Well then, everybody get busy. The food won't cook itself," said Bob, jumping up. "Got those birds cleaned yet, Mack?"

While the others went about their duties, Bob placed the reflector in front of the fire and put the cake in to bake.

He cut eight small steaks, pounded them

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with the flat of the axe, for such freshly killed meat was sure to be tough, and then put his frying-pan on to heat while he sliced some onions. When the pan was red-hot he put in the meat, searing it well on both sides to keep in the natural juices. Then taking another pan he burnt some sugar in it, added a little water, put in a chopped up kidney, thickened the mess with flour and water—seasoned it heavily, and after stirring well, allowed it to simmer slowly. When the steaks were nearly cooked he dropped in the onions, which browned quickly in the juices ; then he took the frying-pans off and laid them where they would keep warm.

A sliver of wood stuck in the johnny-cake came out clean, which showed it was done, and he moved the reflector out of the direct heat.

“ Trout are ready,” said Foster. “ Ring the dinner-bell ! ”

When justice had been done to that dish, Bob poured his gravy over the steaks and brought them sizzling hot to the table.

“ You certainly can cook, Bob ! ” said

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Macklin as his teeth closed over a luscious morsel. "This gravy is delicious."

"Bully," grunted Foster, who was paying strict attention to his plate.

The partridges were also voted a success, though Foster rather grumbled that Macklin should have cooked but four instead of seven.

"Not hungry still, are you?" asked Bob.

"Sure!"

"Then fill up on the apple sauce and the remains of the johnny-cake. You can have my share, you insatiable quicksand."

Even Foster was at last gorged, and with a common desire for rest they all stretched out on the ground and watched the jays come hopping from branch to branch, looking for plunder.

"That was a mighty fine meal," murmured Foster drowsily. "Mighty fine."

And if the grunts that came from the others could be taken as a sign of agreement, there could be no doubt as to their enthusiastic assent to the sentiment.

For a while a deep silence brooded over the

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camp. No one seemed to have energy to speak, much less move, until Foster, rousing himself from the pleasant contemplation of the tidbits just consumed, turned his thoughts to the morrow.

"I suppose you will give us liver and bacon for breakfast, Bob?" he said.

"That is too much!" said the outraged Bob. "Let's pig-pile him," and the others, nothing loath, proceeded to sit upon the unfortunate speaker and roll him in the dust.

"For the love of Mike, boys, be reasonable!" Foster managed to say at last, and the laughter of the others broke up the attack.

But they did have liver and bacon the next morning, and for several days were so busy eating and inventing new dishes that further hunting was impossible.

"Well, fellows," said Bob one afternoon, "it's about time to think of making a move for home. Macklin and I will have to be on hand early to look over the squad and put them through their paces. College opens in ten days, and it will take us six to get to Warrington. How about it?"

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"I suppose we have to. But I hate to leave here. It's been mighty pleasant."

"I hate the idea of the tump-line," said Foster. "My neck is just getting back to normal."

"It will go easier this time. You will be used to it, and the packs will be lighter."

"Are we going back the same way?" asked Tom.

"Yes, I think so. There are a couple of other routes we can take, though, if you'd rather."

"Will they avoid the Chienne?" asked Macklin hopefully.

"No. We have to tackle the Chienne anyway. Well, we needn't decide now. Wait till we get to where the trail branches. Shall we start to-morrow?"

The start was agreed upon, and the rest of the afternoon was busily employed in getting their duffle ready. Bob cut off enough meat to last for the trip and tied it up carefully in a bit of sacking. He cooked an extra johnny-cake. "So we can have it cold for lunch to-morrow," he explained, and looking over the

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supplies left behind what they would not need. "No use lugging this food home."

Foster watched this operation with an anxious eye, fearful that Bob intended to put them on half rations, but his brow gradually cleared as the pile of food to be taken grew.

"Sure that will last us?" he asked nevertheless, and was only half satisfied at Bob's assurance of plenty.

With the thought of the hard work ahead in their minds they turned into their blankets early, but sleep did not come at once, regret at leaving being uppermost in every one's brain.

Of late they had been rising leisurely so that the abrupt summons that Bob gave at four the next morning found the others heavily asleep and very much disinclined to leave their warm nooks. But Bob was insistent, and at last got the camp moving. Breakfast was a quick affair, in sharp contrast to the luxurious meal they had been making it, but hurry as they might it was well on toward seven before the last pack was made

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up, carried down to the lake and put in the canoes.

“ All aboard, fellows ! ” said Bob, setting his canoe afloat. “ Here’s where we say good-bye to the old camp ! ”

CHAPTER XII

THE LOST TRAIL

THE trip up the Chienne was no better and no worse than the trip down, except that there were no windfalls to clear away, and the day was fine.

Thanks to their early start they had put the irritation of the stream some miles behind them before Bob called a halt for lunch, and though the idle weeks in camp had softened their neck muscles somewhat, none had found the morning's work exhausting. Consequently they joked and laughed and ate the cold meal with relish.

"I am glad the old Chienne is behind us," said Benson. "I'm not anxious to buck her vagaries again just now."

"Good practice for Essex, Tom," said Bob. "It won't be many days now before you will be digging your nose in the dirt and wishing

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you had the chance to carry a pack again, instead."

"Not on your life. I'm getting keen to feel the pigskin again, and tumble round in the mud."

"So am I," said Bob unthinking, and then fell silent as he realized with a pang that his football days were over, and as coach his place would be on the side lines.

"Going to miss it, Bob?" asked Macklin quietly, as he guessed his companion's thought.

"Yes. It will come hard not to be in the middle of it," acknowledged Bob with a sigh. "However," he added with an effort at cheerfulness, "I won't have to go into training. That's where I have one on Foster," and he shouldered his pack, in the midst of the laugh that followed. "En Avant! Forward!"

The second day's travel found them at the branching of the trail.

Bob called a council of war.

"We can go on as we came," he said, "or take this trail to the left. It was a good one two years ago, and we avoid that steep climb. What do you say?"

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"I'm for it," said Macklin at once. "It will give us variety."

"Is it any longer?" asked Benson.

"No, about the same."

"Oh, I vote we take it," broke in Joe impatiently. "It can't be any harder than the one we came up by."

"All right, then; here goes," and Bob swung off to the left. As the day grew older, the sky became overclouded and soon they were facing a drizzling rain, which quickly made the trail slippery.

They crossed one small lake, hardly more than a pond, and then when they had gone another mile discovered that the trail had evidently been lately used for lumbering. More than once Bob came to a halt in perplexity, at a loss to know which of two paths to take, so changed was the nature of the country by the felling of trees, and the number of tote roads which had been cut through the forest in preparation for the hauling of logs when winter should arrive.

However, he pressed on, not yielding to his misgivings, but wishing for a companion with

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whom to consult and divide the responsibility. But Macklin had never taken this route, and of course he could expect no aid from the others.

At length Bob's path was barred by fallen timber, and when having put down his pack and scouted ahead he could find no continuation of the trail he was forced to admit to the others that he had taken a wrong turning somewhere.

"What had we better do?" Macklin put the question as they crowded under the canoes to escape the rain.

"Eat lunch while we decide," suggested Foster, and for once his thought of food was received in good part and without laughter. Accordingly Bob got out a scanty supply, and while they chewed, they talked.

"Back trail is my only suggestion," said Bob. "I remember we passed a road a quarter mile or so behind us. That ought to lead somewhere. We can't go on this way, that is certain."

"What are we heading for?" asked Tom.

"There should be a lake a mile ahead. Well, let's get moving."

THE LOST TRAIL

The packs seemed to grow heavier as they retraced their steps and a gloomy silence settled over the party. However, when they reached the fork and took the new trail, the feeling that they were at least going ahead cheered them somewhat. After walking half a mile and finding no lake Bob called another halt, and, dropping his pack, went ahead to look for it.

In a few minutes he came hurrying back.

"Water just ahead, fellows. We are on the right trail at last."

But his cheerfulness was premature. In his relief at sighting water through the trees, he had not gone all the way to the lake, but had taken for granted it was the one he was looking for. Consequently his chagrin was the deeper when, on stepping down to the shore, he found himself staring, not at the big stretch of water he had confidently expected to see, but a small circular lake not a quarter mile in diameter.

"The deuce! This isn't the place," he said.
"We're wrong again."

"Where are we?"

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"Blessed if I know," Bob replied. "I have never been here before—I know that."

Foster put down his pack with a sullen air, and sat on it, as if to say, "You've got us into this scrape, now get us out. It's none of my affair."

"What are we going to do?"

Bob thought for a moment without replying, his lips firmly compressed.

"There is only one thing we can do," he said in a determined manner. "Camp here for the night."

He turned to Macklin. "If you and Joe will make camp, I'll take Tom and back trail to that lumber shanty we passed this morning. Perhaps I can get some information."

"It seems to me that's a forlorn hope," said Foster. "Why not turn right about face and go back to where we left the other trail? I'm tired of trailing 'round and not getting anywhere."

Bob swung around on him.

"Of course it's a question for us all to decide, but I hate to go back when I'm sure we must be near the right trail."

THE LOST TRAIL

"Why not do as Bob suggests?" broke in Benson. "If we can't get the information we want, we can always go back in the morning. I for one don't want to give up without one more try."

So it was decided, and Bob and Tom swung off down the trail, leaving the others to make camp.

"Gee, it's nice to walk along this way without a pack," said Tom after they had gone some distance. "I feel unusually light on my feet."

They came to the lumber camp in a surprisingly short time, seeing that it had taken the better part of a day to cover the same distance while laden.

The shanty was a log affair, the cracks stuffed with moss and a tar-paper roof. Smoke was curling from the chimney.

"Some one is at home," said Bob cheerily, and was about to knock on the door when he was hailed from behind.

"Salut," said the man, giving the customary greeting.

He was a typical French-Canadian lumber-

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man of the poorer sort. Down at the heel, unshaved, unwashed, narrow-shouldered; yet withal a pleasant manner and only too willing to set "les messieurs" on the right trail.

Stolidly he led the way. His direction was at right angles to the trail Bob had just traveled, and it seemed as though their guide must have mistaken their wishes and was leading them in the opposite direction.

At length the trail opened into another, much larger and more marked, which twisted to the left.

"This is the trail you should have taken," said the guide. "The other is used no more."

"Merci, bieu," said Bob, coming to a halt.

"Non, monsieur. I will go further," and the lumberman set out again at a pace which taxed the others to equal.

At last they came to a small marshy lake, the banks of which showed signs of having been used as a landing place.

"The trail, monsieur, continues just across there. You will not miss it. The lake you are camped on is just here—see?"

They turned abruptly along the shore and

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in a furlong, Bob, with an exclamation of surprise, stepped out on the little circular lake of their earlier disappointment.

"Why, we were nearly right, after all," he said.

"Yes, monsieur," said their guide smiling. "But it is well to be sure, in the woods. Monsieur was right in coming back."

"I am ever so much obliged," said Bob diving into his pocket for some money. "Here is a little present."

But their guide refused.

"Non, monsieur. It is nothing. Good-night."

"Well," said Bob nonplussed, "it's very kind of you to take all this trouble."

"Do you like chocolate?" said Tom, suddenly drawing a half-pound cake out of his pocket, and tendering it to the lumberman.

His face broke into a grin.

"Mille merci, monsieur. I have the sweet tooth. But can monsieur spare it?"

"Yes, indeed!"

The guide pocketed the gift and with a "bon nuit" set out on the back trail.

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"Good idea of yours, Tom," said Bob. "I hated to have him go off without something. How did you happen to have it with you?"

"I slipped it in my pocket before we left the others. I thought we might feel the need of something before we got home."

Dusk had fallen. Across the lake they could see the occasional flicker of the camp-fire. Bob gave a loud hallo, and after an interval they heard an answering shout faintly over the water. They sat down to wait, and then the distant dip of a paddle gave notice of a canoe's approach. Soon they could see it, ghostlike in the gloom, a dark mass indicating Macklin's presence.

"Hello!" he said as he drew near peering ahead. "Is that you, Bob?"

"Yes. The two of us."

"I wasn't certain at first where the call came from. Why didn't you shout again?"

"Got camp fixed up?" asked Bob as they were paddling back.

"Yes, pretty well. But this mist has kept everything so wet that it wasn't easy. Did you find the trail?"

THE LOST TRAIL

"Yes. Our troubles are over. An obliging lumberman piloted us to it. It's just down there where we came from, a couple of hundred yards."

"That's fine. I was fearful that we would have to go back the whole distance with those blessed packs."

The camp was a dreary one. The heavy rain which had kept up all day had soaked the ground, and the heavy mist which had succeeded it was little better.

They ate a cheerless supper in the open and changed their soaked clothes for dry ones.

Their eyes opened to a gray world. The rain had commenced again, and the air was cold and raw.

"We really must have some fish this morning," announced Bob. "Who is going to catch them?"

There was a dead silence in camp.

"I'm afraid it is your turn, Mack," said Bob after a pause.

Macklin groaned. "Do you mean to say I have to go out in this rain, and catch food for your breakfast?"

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"It looks like it."

"Well, if I must, I must," said Macklin grumbling. "I won't go out in these clothes, though. I have to keep one set dry. Throw me over those wet things."

The touch of the clammy garments against his bare skin was too much for Macklin's fortitude. "Whew!" he exclaimed. "I can't put those on. They are icy. I'd get a chill."

He considered the proposition with a wry face, fingering the wet clothes without being able to summon up the necessary courage to assume them.

"Get a move on, Mack!" urged Bob. "We are waiting for those fish."

"All right, you slave-driver. I pity that team of ours when you get to bossing it," Macklin exclaimed, jumping up. "I'll go as nature made me!" He picked up his rod and walked out of the tent.

"Jumping Julia! You'll freeze! Don't be an idiot."

Macklin struck an heroic attitude.

"My demise will rest at your stomachs. Duty calls!" and he set a canoe afloat.

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Macklin paddled out a few yards and then, sitting cross-legged in the bottom, made a cast.

The fish were kind to him. At his second cast a trout rose, and in a moment was safely aboard. Others soon followed. The lads on shore watched the performance with interest, but were turning away when Macklin uttered a piercing shriek.

"What's the matter?" called Bob alarmed.

"Ouch!" was the reply. "That darned trout took a piece out of my big toe."

"Mistook it for a Brown Hackle, I wager!" was the unfeeling response.

"Getting cold?"

"Naw. Warm as toast. Hi-yi!"

"What's wrong now?"

"Fish are very clammy when you sit on them! One slid down under me."

"Throw him out, then."

"Not on your life; it will make him more tender!"

The banter continued till Macklin had caught enough for a mess and started for shore.

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"Regular Greek god," commented Bob sarcastically, as he watched.

"Lunatic at large," corrected Benson. "Last seen on a Canadian lake."

"That's a nice return for my unselfish labors," said Macklin, stepping ashore. "Here, take your old fish. I'm going to dress."

CHAPTER XIII

THE BIG LAKE

BEFORE they had finished the last of the trout, the sun came peeping through the clouds, and when they broke camp, a strong west wind had swept the heavens clear, and gave promise of continued fine weather.

They found the trail with little difficulty, and in high good spirits trudged along under their diminishing packs. Physically, it was a different set of men from those who had set out nearly three weeks before, and as Bob watched his companions, he saw visions of a successful football season.

"Macklin won't be any picnic this fall for the man who plays opposite him," he thought as he saw the ease with which the tackle swung up the canoe, which by reason of recent soaking was pounds heavier than usual. "He's in good shape."

The relative value of the other two to fill

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the position left vacant by Trelawney at left guard was not by any means settled in his mind. The greater weight carried by Foster was not to be despised, but Bob found himself sighing that Benson had not grown heavier, which showed his opinion of the mental equipment of the rivals.

They made good progress homeward the second day, and the third found them within striking distance.

"If this wind holds," said Bob, "we may get wind-bound on the big lake. It will be dead in our teeth."

"Oh, we can push through," said Macklin confidently. "We are all pretty good canoe-men now."

Bob looked dubious, however, and his face did not clear when on arriving at the lake he saw the four mile stretch liberally dotted with white caps and waves of good size breaking into foam at his feet.

"We'll stop here for lunch, anyway," he said. "The wind may fall in an hour or so. We have lots of time. The team won't be there to meet us until to-morrow, and it doesn't

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make much difference whether we spend the night under canvas or in the cabin. There is no use in taking unnecessary risks."

But the wind did not die down. It blew less violently, it is true, but three o'clock came, and still the long lake was in a turmoil. The others began to get impatient as the time passed, and urged a start.

"We can make it all right!" said Foster. "Let's get a move on."

"If we could work over to the lee of the shore, we would be safe enough," agreed Bob. "But we couldn't head straight into it. We would fill in no time with these loads. We have only about four inches of free-board. And by the time we edged over, we would be through the worst, anyway. It's the first mile I am afraid of."

They sat on the wind-swept beach, watching the white caps, which diminished in number very slowly. At last Bob got up.

"I think we might try it now," he announced with a grave face. "But it won't be easy. You'll have to watch every stroke."

With many misgivings, for he felt that he

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had been persuaded into acting against his better judgment, Bob gave the word to embark.

The start was difficult. The waves were still large enough to make the operation of launching a heavily loaded canoe without shipping much water a nice problem.

"You two get in, Mack," said Bob, as the canoe danced up and down, "and Tom and I will give you a start."

"What will you do?" queried Macklin.

"Oh, we will manage. We know more about it."

The canoe danced perilously as it met the first waves, and Bob, standing in the water, expected momentarily to see it broach to, before Macklin could get headway on the craft. But the first wave was negotiated safely; the second slid underneath, merely flicking a quart of white foam over the gunwale in passing, as a warning of what it could do if it tried, and the canoe hopped over the third with some appearance of life. They were afloat.

"Hurry now, Tom. We don't want them

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to get too big a start on us—in case anything happens.”

It took all Bob's watermanship to get his canoe afloat without swamping it. The waves were so irregular, so broken by the strong wind which gave them life that there was nothing to be gained for waiting for an opening. There was none. Twice a wave took the bow and swung it around, grounding them on the beach ; and each time Bob had to jump overboard and set the canoe straight.

“ Hold her all you can this time, Tom,” he called as he made a third attempt. “ Now, all together.”

For a moment success hung in the balance ; the canoe wavered in its course ; then as Bob drove his paddle in strongly, it pushed its bow through the crest of a wave, spattering Tom with spray, and rode buoyantly over another.

“ Good work,” shouted Bob above the wind. “ We are all right now. Just take it easy.”

He saw the other canoe some distance ahead, and to his right. Macklin was evi-

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dently losing no time in making for the lee of the shore.

“Not too fast,” he cautioned Tom, as the canoe threatened to bury her nose in a wave, but changed her mind at the last minute and charged boldly up its side. “Slowly does it, or we will swamp her. We have to give her time to rise to the waves.”

Bob's task was not easy. To keep the canoe head on to the waves was not so difficult. It required only patience. But to edge her over to the shore took a high degree of skill. When a lull gave him a chance, he would swing the bow around and gain a few coveted feet, only to return promptly to the old course when a dangerous looking wave approached.

This operation he repeated a hundred times in safety. It required intense concentration, and it was but seldom he could spare a look for the other canoe, which seemed to be making heavy weather of it, though thus far safely.

As they drew out into the wide expanse of tumbling waters, the canoes seemed dwarfed in size and frail craft indeed for such a passage. But Bob knew that the canoes would

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not fail if the men wielding the paddles did not, and after a time he began to exult in the way they rode the waves.

At last, after what seemed a century of effort, they began to get the benefit of the protection of the further shore, and then every stroke brought them into smoother water, until the lake had subsided to a very moderate sea.

Bob wanted to relax, but he knew that he would get just as wet if they swamped now as though it had happened two miles back, and he forced himself to redoubled watchfulness, for a mistake would still have meant disaster.

Tom kept paddling away in the bow like a piece of machinery, and after Bob's first warning had judged their pace to a nicety.

"Getting tired?" called Bob as they approached the beach.

"Won't be sorry to land," Tom shouted back. "Legs are asleep."

Another moment saw the canoe safely beached, and Tom tumbled stiffly out, drawing the canoe after him.

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The others had landed fifty yards away, and had already unloaded the packs and hauled their canoe out.

"Here's where I take a rest!" declared Bob, stretching out on the sand. "I'm tired!"

The others were nothing loath to follow his example. The warm sand felt good to their tired bodies, and for a time there was silence.

"It was touch and go, there, once or twice," said Macklin reminiscently. "I edged off too much, and had the deuce of a time getting her back. I thought she would broach to."

"It struck me that you were taking risks," said Bob. "I noticed you were having trouble."

"Well, all's well that ends well. But I'm thinking you were about right in not starting two hours ago. I think we would have swamped."

The delay at the lake and the slow crossing had eaten up three hours of precious time, so that darkness overtook them some miles short of their destination.

"We had better camp," said Bob. "There are three miles of portage and a mile of lake

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yet. We can do it comfortably in the morning and be back at St. Pierre by evening. How about it?"

The others, though disappointed at not getting in, agreed, and they prepared to make camp for the last time.

"It's been a great trip, hasn't it?" remarked Bob to nobody in particular as they lay stretched out round the fire after supper.

"Bully! Simply bully!" said Benson. "I had no idea it could be so much fun. And I think I must have put on ten pounds."

"And I have lost that much!" broke in Foster. "I'm hard as nails."

"I think we owe a vote of thanks to Bob Walters." This from Macklin. "The success of the trip has been due to him. We would have been babes in the woods without his experience."

"You're right. No question about that!"

"Three cheers for Coach Walters!"

The cheers were given banteringly, but Bob read the appreciation under the fooling, and was grateful.

"If you coach the team through its troubles

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as well as you have coached us, Essex will not lift our scalp this year," said Macklin positively.

"Of course you men realize," said Bob gravely, "that since I know what excellent condition you are in, I won't have the slightest pity on you. I am going to make you work from the word go!"

"That's not fair," protested Foster. "We are your guests up here, and you should never use knowledge gained under your own roof-tree, so to speak, to your guests' disadvantage. That's rule No. 1 in the book of etiquette."

"Your point is well taken," grinned Bob. "So I'll turn you over to McLane, and of course if he reports you in perfect physical condition, I shall have to act accordingly. I can't help that, can I?"

"Hypocrite!" was Foster's answer.

The fact that it was the last day made their next morning's work both a sadness and an irritation. The near approach of civilization began to get on their nerves, so that all hailed with relief the sight of the little meadow, the log cabin and horses cropping the grass.

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"Here we are! Hi-yi-yi-yi!" yelled Bob, and two figures could be seen to detach themselves from the background, and come running down to the bank, madly waving their arms.

"Hello, Pierre. Jean! How goes it?" said Bob, as they came within speaking distance.

"Well, well, monsieur! And did you have luck? I see. A fine head."

"Fine to carry—I don't think," said Foster, whose back was still raw from carrying it.

"It was a success, then?"

"Yes, Pierre. We had a first-rate time. But I'll tell you all about it as we drive along. Let's get the canoes on the wagon."

"We expected you last night. We had a big blaze, but you did not come. I was afraid of trouble, but Jean said, 'No—Monsieur Walters can take care of himself.'"

"Thanks for the compliment, Jean," said Bob laughing. "We would have been here, but we got hung up on the Big Lake. There was a bad wind——"

"Sacré! That is bad—that lake. She is wicked!"

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"Well, she didn't get us this time, Pierre. So don't worry. Let's get started."

Pierre wanted to know all the particulars of the trip, so Bob was kept busy answering questions all through the long drive.

"Glad to be back, monsieur?" asked Pierre with a twinkle in his eye.

"No, indeed. I hate to leave the forest; and these clothes," he added as he stretched luxuriously.

"Will you come back next year, do you think?"

"I don't know, Pierre. That is on the knees of the gods. I'd like to!"

"Allons, donc!" called Pierre and they descended the hill on a gallop.

Except for Pierre's interminable questions, there was little conversation. The others were morose at coming home, and were content to sit in silence recalling the pleasant days of which this was the last.

"Almost in, fellows." Bob turned in his seat and called their attention to the church spire which rose above the next hill.

"What's that hum I hear?" asked Benson.

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"The sawmill, monsieur. You can hear it a long distance."

As they entered the upper end of the village the hum rose in key, and at times developed into a full grown shriek as the saw encountered a knot.

"Here we are," said Bob as Pierre brought his horse to a halt. "And there's old Duval. Hello, Monsieur Duval!"

The innkeeper came running out as he heard the shout, his face beaming with pleasure when he saw who hailed him.

"Eh, Monsieur Walters, I am glad to see you. Did you have the good luck?"

"Pretty fair. One moose. Small, though. But we had a fine time."

"And the others?" glancing at Foster. "Did they enjoy themselves?"

"You bet we did," said Foster heartily.

"Well, you must be hungry. I will see about supper."

"First get us some hot water. Lots of it. Buckets of it," said Bob. "I want to wash, don't you, boys?"

Yes, and to change our clothes. I didn't

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appreciate the delicate perfume these garments emitted until I got in the house," said Macklin, sniffing the air.

"What do you expect when you have lived in the same shirt for three weeks?" retorted Bob as he led the way up-stairs.

Duval hurried off for the hot water, and by the time they had stripped, appeared with a couple of pitchers.

"This is all we had hot," he said apologetically, "but I am heating more."

"All right. Hurry it along!"

The bathing facilities were scanty, but by putting a basin on the floor they managed to secure a respectable sponge bath.

"Feels good, doesn't it?" said Bob.

"Yes, but just look at my hands." Macklin held them out. "Puffed, cracked—why, I'll never get them looking decent again."

"Oh, don't worry! There are no girls to see them up here."

With reluctance they got into civilized clothes again. The starched collar choked necks accustomed to expand at will; their feet, broadened by the use of moccasins, protested

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at being wedged into the narrow prisons of fashion, and it was altogether an uncomfortable lot of men who attacked the food Duval set before them.

"It doesn't take long for civilized man to revert to barbarism," said Bob as he caught himself picking up a luscious bone in his fingers. "I'll have to learn table manners all over again."

They were all glad to turn in early, for the long ride and the excitement of home coming had tired them out.

But sleep would not come. To Benson it seemed as though he were suffocating; the room was close. The small window seemed only a mockery, built to emphasize its inadequacy—surely of no practical use. He tossed about on his bed. He got up, walked to the window and leaned out in envy of the cow whose soft breathing he could hear below him in the little pasture.

From the next room he could hear the sounds of other restless beings. Foster alone seemed asleep.

"I can't stand this," said Tom, and, yield-

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ing to impulse, picked up his camp blanket and tiptoed to the door. In the dark entry he nearly collided with another figure.

“ Who is that ? ”

“ Is that you, Tom ? ”

“ You nearly scared me to death, Bob. Where are you going ? ”

“ Can't sleep. Going out. ”

“ Same here. Got a blanket ? ”

“ Yes. Come on ! ”

So it was that the next morning Monsieur Duval, arising betimes to milk the cow, was thrown into peals of laughter by the sight of two of his guests, rolled up in blankets, sound asleep on the lawn.

CHAPTER XIV

THE "FIRST CALL"

WHEN the travelers reached New York they scattered for a visit to their respective homes.

"I'll expect to see you next week," said Bob as he shook hands all around. "Take care of yourselves. Good-bye."

He paid a hurried visit to his family, and then left for Warrington. There was no time to be lost in gathering up the numerous threads of his duties, and making a start at welding together the organization which the summer vacation had pulled asunder.

His first move, however, was to attend to his own affairs, so he walked over to the law school, had a chat with the dean, and enrolled himself as a member of the first year class. Then he walked over to the dormitories, saw the bursar, and leased the same suite of rooms he had had in senior year.

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"Whom are you rooming with?" asked the official with pen poised.

"I don't know yet. I'll have to look around a bit. Any of the old crowd back?"

"Here is one of them," said a joyful voice in his ear, and he found himself shaking Livingston by the hand. "Well, well," said the latter, "you are as brown as an Indian. What have you been doing?"

"Oh, making a personally conducted tour through the beauties of the Canadian wilderness. But what are you doing here? No chance of your being in the law school, I suppose."

"No, not that, but I have signed up for a post-graduate course in English."

"What! Not really? That's bully!" said Bob, bubbling over with pleased surprise. Then he turned to the bursar. "Put down Livingston for a room in that suite."

"Why, have you rented the old rooms?"

"Sure! I took an option on 'em last spring. Why, we are going to have another great year together."

THE "FIRST CALL"

"Who is your third? Not Trelawney, I suppose," said Livingston smiling.

"No, poor Trel is sticking to his banking. Becoming quite a financier. Been working all summer. But we can pick up some one."

"I understand Newton is going into medicine. How would he do?"

"First-rate, if that's true. How can we find out?"

"Oh, we can locate him when he turns up. Let's go up and look things over."

"Look very familiar, don't they?" said Bob as they stood looking at the bare walls. "We'll have to get busy and fix things up."

"How is football?"

"Don't know much about it yet. Can't tell either till we get the first call out. But I have three men who are good."

"Who?"

"The three I have been teaching woodcraft to—Macklin, Benson and Foster."

"Who's Foster? Don't think I know him."

"You wouldn't be apt to. Sophomore last year. Played on his class team. Big man. Pretty good. I was looking for some one to

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fill Trel's place, and I took those two up to try them out. Got 'em in fine shape."

"Well," said Livingston, "hope you have luck. I have to go down and see about my trunks. I left them at the station till I knew where to send them."

"Same here; but I must go down to the field first. See you later."

They parted under the tower at the entrance to the Big Quadrangle and Bob pursued his way to the gymnasium.

He found the usually busy place bathed in the extreme quiet of a September afternoon when unbroken by the human element. Leaving the field deserted but for two figures at the further end he walked into the dressing-rooms. A man bending over a miscellaneous collection of worn football clothes was the only occupant.

"Busy, Jimmy?" he said, the other not having heard his entrance.

Jimmy jumped. "Why, cap'en!" he said standing up. "You sure startled me."

"How are things, Jimmy? Ready for work again?"

THE "FIRST CALL"

"Almost. Mr. McLane told me to get out all the ould suits. Says we are goin' to have the bunch here in a couple of days."

"Yes. That's right. First call went out for Thursday. Just for the old crowd, though. College doesn't open till Friday, I believe."

"That's so. My, but you are looking fine, cap'en. I wisht you was going to play this fall."

"So do I, Jimmy," rejoined Bob with a sigh. "But you mustn't be calling me cap any more. You'll be making Macklin jealous."

Jimmy grinned. "I guess he can stand it, and it wouldn't seem natural not to call you cap. Not a bit of it, when you were the best one we've had since I've been in charge down here."

"Rubbish! Is McLane around anywhere?"

"He was here just a bit ago. Went upstairs, I think."

Bob found McLane just the same small, wiry, keen-eyed trainer as ever. After the

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first greetings were over, they plunged at once into plans for the season.

"We've got almost a veteran team this time, Mac. So our main problem is going to be in keeping them from going stale."

"Well, you leave that to me, and I'll get 'em out against Essex feeling like a bunch of colts. Which old men come back?"

"Fox, left end; Owens and Macklin tackles; Calder, center; Smith at guard; Dolan full and Fletcher half back. That makes a pretty good nucleus."

McLane nodded.

"Then of course there are the subs. Benson will make a stab at filling Trel's place if Foster doesn't beat him to it. Baker for quarter. Those are the best of the bunch. You know we weren't very well supplied last fall with substitutes that were worth their salt. The other places are open."

"There's Johnnie Stone for the other half," suggested McLane.

Bob pursed his lips. "Y-yes," he said. "He's brilliant enough, but——" His voice died away as though he did not care to ex-

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press the thought in his mind. "At any rate," he continued, "Stone's so back in his studies that we can't rely on being able to use him. The faculty might yank him out at any minute."

"He told me he would work this summer."

"I hope he did, but I doubt it. Well, we'll start things on Thursday. Macklin will be here to-morrow, he told me. So long." And Bob started after his trunks.

When he returned to his rooms, he found that Livingston had run across Newton, and persuaded him to join them.

"Not that he required much persuasion," said Livingston. "He jumped at the chance."

"Where is he now?"

"Went down to the medical school."

"Here he is," said Bob as he heard footsteps on the stairs. "Hello, Newt," he called.

"That's not my name," came from the corridor and a large bulk filled the doorway.

"Trelawney!"

"That's what! Large as life and twice as natural. How are you, Bob? Have a good trip?"

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"Fine. You're looking fat, Trel," said Bob critically.

"Of course I am. When do you suppose I'd get the time to exercise, working down in that hole from nine to five? I tell you I envied you fellows up in the woods, when the thermometer climbed over the ninety mark."

"It must have been tough."

"Not up to college, that's one sure thing. Even though I do drag down a salary at the end of the month. Well, tell me about yourself. I don't want to talk shop. Dear knows I get enough of it down the street! Same old diggings, I see," he continued looking around. "Who is going to room with you?"

"Liv and Newt."

"Newt?" said Trelawney in surprise. "What branch of the higher education is he going to take up?"

"Medicine."

"Medicine? That is a joke. Doc Newt! It is to laugh!"

"No more of a joke than Banker Trelawney," said a voice from the doorway. "Why, Trel, you old stiff, the mere idea of

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your trying to compute the profit on a hundred shares of Steel Common, rise one-eighth of a point—deduct two months' interest at 4.4 gives me a hollow feeling in my little insides. You, who could never make two and two equal anything but five till Bob showed you how."

"Hold on, Newt," said Trelawney, grandiloquently. "You mistake my job. I leave the figuring to the clerks. I'm a financier! You forget yourself."

"Well, whatever you are I'm mighty glad to see you. How've you been?"

Then without waiting for Trelawney's reply he continued: "Hog-fat, that's sure. But been enjoying yourself?"

"Not so you'd notice it. I've been working."

"It is not impossible for the two to go together," remarked Livingston sarcastically.

"It is to any one but a high-brow like you," said Trelawney. "I'm not speaking of men who eat work—whose idea of pleasure is a shady nook and a copy of the latest tariff schedule."

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"I suppose you would fill the shady nook with a girl?" said Bob with a grin.

"Sure!" retorted Trelawney unabashed. "What else is a nook for? But to get back to you, Newton. Are you really thinking of becoming a doctor?"

"Yes. I seem to have a turn that way. I am going to try it."

"Wish you luck; but from all I hear, you will be sweating blood before you graduate. Pretty stiff, isn't it?"

Newton nodded.

"By the way, Bob," said Trelawney who seemed desirous of keeping the floor, "I've got a good man for you. Ames—Gregory Ames. Freshman last year, but didn't come out for the team. He'll make a good man."

"Not if he hasn't more spirit than that," commented Bob.

"Wasn't his fault. Son of old man Ames, you know. Banker—prominent alumnus and all that. Did something or other back in the eighties. Standing broad jump or something like that. Wouldn't let Greg play last year. Made him study. Great mistake, I think, but

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you never can tell. Anyway, the old man is keen on it this year because Gregory—awful name that—studied hard and stood high. Asked me to speak to you. Give him a show, will you?"

"Certainly," said Bob. "But that's all I can promise you. He'll have to make good, if he wants a place."

"Oh, of course. I wasn't trying to bribe you, you old martinet," said Trelawney affectionately. "Just give him a show. He'll make good, or I'm a Dutchman!"

"What does he weigh?"

"About one-seventy. Nicely put together—fast. Make a good half, I think."

"I'll keep him in mind, Trel. Will he be out on Thursday?"

"First call? I don't know if he is home yet. But I'll 'phone out and see."

"You seem on close terms with the Amesese."

"I am. See Mr. Ames down-town every day and been out to his house for dinner. Treated me like a brick. Only fun I've had this summer. By the way, when does Macklin get back?"

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"To-day some time."

"Well, remember me to him. I must be off."

"Be out here Thursday?" asked Bob.

"Yes, if the financial situation permits it," retorted Trelawney, with a grin. "So long."

"Doesn't look any too healthy, does he?" commented Bob as Trelawney vanished.

"No. Has a pasty look. It will do him a world of good to get out this fall and coach. You ought to make him do it, Bob."

"I intend to, Newt. I'll need him to show the linemen a thing or two."

Macklin arrived that evening, and the next day spent his time closeted with Bob, discussing the football situation, comparing notes on new plays, and getting out a set of signals.

"I was talking to McLane yesterday, Frank," said Bob, when a provisional set of signals had been decided on, "and we agreed that our toughest proposition this fall would be keeping the team on edge. Remember, we have seven veterans. They are bound to go stale unless we use the best kind of judg-

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ment. Now McLane knows more about that than you or I do."

"What are you driving at?"

"That you put your authority in his hands so far as the condition of the men is concerned. Don't let's hamper him, even if we feel differently. He is more than willing to take the full responsibility."

Macklin thought for a moment.

"I guess you're right, Bob. I'll try to keep my hands off. But it may be hard at times."

"All right, then, that's settled. Now the other question is the conflict of authority between you and myself. We've got to pull together, or the team will go to the dogs."

"Oh, we'll get on all right," said Macklin easily.

"I don't doubt it. I'm only preparing for emergencies. We might as well thrash out any possible differences now."

"Well?"

"Suppose you think one man deserves a place, for instance, and I want to play another. Who wins?"

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"Oh, we would probably agree. We could argue it out."

"Yes, but suppose even then we don't agree?"

Macklin's lips tightened. His election to the captaincy of the Warrington University football team was something he took great pride in. He did not want to be a mere figurehead, and yet in his soul he knew Bob Walters' judgment was better than his when it came to canvassing a man's capabilities. His pride pulled him one way; his desire for a successful season the other, and the latter won. At least he compromised.

"I have great faith in your judgment, Bob, and I expect to rely upon it largely. But I can't turn over the team to you. I'm captain, and I mean to be one in more than name. I'll agree to this, though. Where we have simply a difference of opinion and neither can convince the other, my wish goes. But when you come to me and say, 'Mack, I know so and so is the better man,' why then I yield. Understand."

Bob considered this a moment.

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"That seems satisfactory," he said. "Let it go at that."

Thursday afternoon saw the usual bustle in the gymnasium. Men were falling over each other in their endeavor to find their suits and get out on the field as quickly as possible. The season was officially open.

Bob and Macklin greeted the old players warmly, and went around among the new candidates introducing themselves and keeping an eye open for promising material.

"Smith," said Bob sternly, "you are too fat."

"I know it, Walters," said the right guard. "Only ten pounds or so, though."

"Well, work yourself. Get it off."

"Fletcher," he said a moment later, "how is the leg we're depending on? Limber?"

"Fine as silk, Bob," said Fletcher laughing. "I took a football away with me this summer and practiced punting with my kid brother. Think I have added five yards to my distance."

"That's good work," said Bob enthusiastic-

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ally clapping him on the back. "That's the kind of spirit I like."

When every one was dressed and out on the field, Bob called the squad together.

"Before we begin our work," he said, "I want to outline the situation. We beat Essex last fall, with a green team. And we did it because every man worked his hardest. And the reason they worked so hard was because each man was afraid of losing his place.

"Now we have seven men back this fall who played in the Essex game. They are what are called veterans. Most of you other men probably have the idea that they have their positions cinched. That's all wrong. There is not one of them who won't go by the board if one of you shows up better. The only advantage they have over you is that their ability is known. They get first chance. It's up to you to show your superiority.

"Another thing. The mere fact that one of you is chasing a veteran for his position will make him hustle in a way no coach or captain can. So even if you don't win out,

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you'll have helped Warrington win. A strong set of substitutes is the most valuable asset a team can have."

"That's right," said McLane, nodding his approval.

"Now there are five positions vacant. We want to fill them with the best material we have. There won't be any favoritism. So get out and hustle."

As the group broke up, scattering to different parts of the field, one of the men stepped up to Bob.

"I want to introduce myself," he said. "My name is Ames." The boy was plainly embarrassed, and Bob for the moment could not place him. Some of the group halted idly to hear the conversation.

"My father is John Ames, the banker," went on the boy, losing his head somewhat and striving to make himself known. "Trelawney told me ——"

"Oh, you are Gregory Ames!" said Bob, a light suddenly breaking in on him. "I remember now. Trelawney told me all about you," and to relieve the boy's confusion,

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added, "he said you were mighty good. I'll give you a chance, sure."

As Bob turned away, still in conversation with Ames, one of the group looked after them sarcastically.

"No, there won't be any favoritism," he said mimicking Bob's voice. "Rats!"

It was John Stone.

CHAPTER XV

LOOKING THEM OVER

WHEN the law school opened on the following Monday and Bob counted up his hours of lectures, he found that coaching a football team and the study of the law was not a very happy combination.

In the first place, some of his lectures conflicted with the hours he must perforce spend on the field, and he knew from experience that the time spent on the field was but a small part of a coach's duties. They began at dawn and ended at bedtime, whenever that might be.

"Where I am going to find time to do much reading, I don't see," he said in dismay to Livingston. "The amount of work the professors assign would take five hours a day to do at all thoroughly. I suppose I'll have to let it slide till after the season."

"If I were you, Bob," said Livingston,

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after a moment's thought, "I would attend all the lectures I could, but I would confine my reading to the one or two subjects I had time to cover perfectly. That's better than getting a smattering of all."

"Good advice, Liv. That solves the problem very nicely."

"How is the team looking?"

"Pretty fair. We ought to win to-morrow by a tidy score."

This conversation took place a week after the opening of college, and the first game was the next day. Having so many veterans neither Bob nor the captain had any misgivings as to stage fright, the older men being sure to cover up any mistakes the new ones might make.

"Who is taking Trelawney's place?"

"Foster in the first half—Benson in the second. It's going to be a pretty fight between them for the position."

"Which will win?"

"Ask me something easy, Liv. Foster has the advantage in weight."

The opening game of the season being

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always chosen by the old graduates to get a line on the team that would represent Warrington, the stands contained a very respectable crowd that Saturday.

It was Bob's hope to establish such a lead early in the game as to make it feasible to do a lot of experimenting with his new men. And Merriton helped him by sending up a weak team.

The Warrington line was impenetrable to any attack, and when on the offense tore the Merriton forwards to pieces. As a natural result, the playing of Warrington sent the crowd into ecstasy, for it entirely overlooked, as a crowd always does, the fact that a weak opponent makes the work of the other team shine with a fictitious luster.

Stone, at right half, in particular took the fancy of the audience. Time and again he circled Merriton's ends for long gains; runs made spectacular by the weak tackling of his opponents, and possible by the efficient help of Fletcher and Dolan in boxing the opposing end. Twice he got away clear for a touchdown, his natural ability increased by the sure

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knowledge that he had the legs of any man on the Merriton team.

"He's a find, isn't he?" was the general comment. "Gee, he is fast!"

"What did you say his name was?"

There was no necessity of asking the last question long. Everybody soon knew, and before the game was over the student body had taken Johnnie Stone to its heart.

Many, of course, had known him the previous year, but remembered him rather for his ready wit and easily given comradeship, than because he had played on the scrub team.

Now that he was in a fair way to become famous, his friends boasted of their acquaintance, so that his life's history rapidly became public property.

He was a son of the people. His father was a small contractor, and the son had graduated from the local high school. That was all, but it was enough to scrape acquaintance on, and as he passed along the street that evening, he found himself the center of observation, which his natural sociability turned to good account. There was no question

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that Stone had made an impression on the college.

"What do you think of 'em?" asked Bob, as he walked off the field with Macklin after Merriton had been disposed of to the tune of forty-five to nothing.

"It looks like a big scoring team."

"Can't tell much, of course, from this afternoon. Merriton was a mess!"

"Stone played well."

"Yes; brilliant, but risky. He didn't follow his interference more than twice the whole afternoon."

"Well, he got away with it!"

"Yes. He did the right thing under the circumstances. But the point that puzzles me is whether he adapted his game to Merriton's weakness or whether that's his natural tendency. It would never do against strong ends. He would be thrown for a loss every time!"

"He did show the same tendency in practice," admitted Macklin.

"Oh, well, we can probably drive it out of him."

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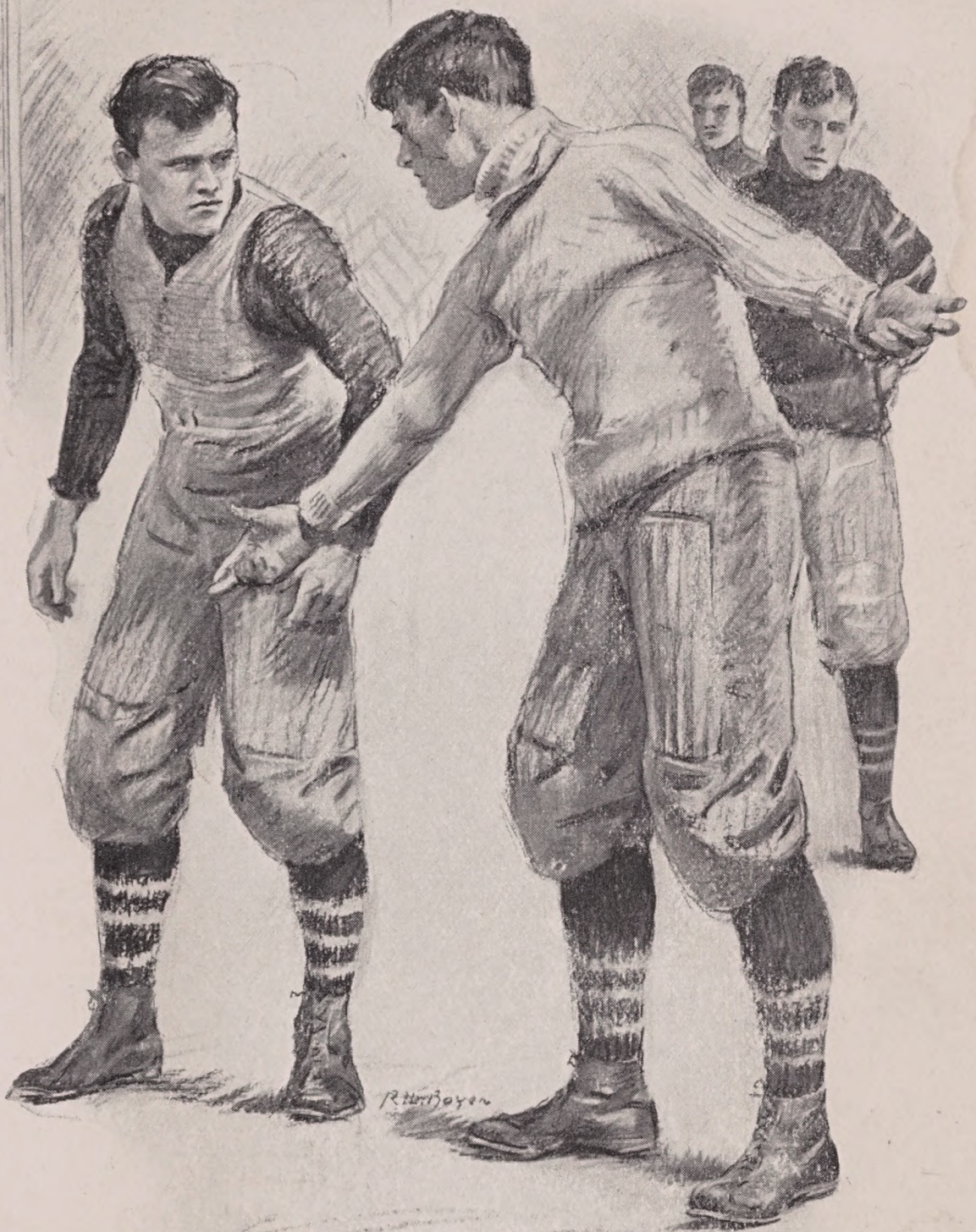
"I hope so. He will be a valuable man. By far the best for the position I have spotted yet."

Bob gave a grudging assent.

He was by nature distrustful of the spectacular player unless the brilliancy was built on a foundation of methodical, heady play, and he was not at all sure that Stone had that reserve to fall back upon in a hard game where the chance for bringing off a spectacular play is one in a thousand.

"It's the unexpected that counts," he said aloud. "The man who follows his interference all through a game until the psychological moment, and then throws all rules aside and plays on inspiration is much more apt to bring the play off than if he made it a custom. 'Keep your opponent guessing' is to my mind the whole thing in football. Stone doesn't do that."

During the succeeding week, Bob spent much time in coaching Stone to overcome his habit of doubling back and leaving his interference when he saw an opponent coming at him.



“NOW DO WHAT I TELL YOU”

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"But I can't use my speed then," objected the half-back, when called to account. "The interference slows up as it meets the end, and I think I stand a better chance if I double around it."

"Yes, and if you happen to be tackled you lose eight yards instead of three," said Bob impatiently. "Now do what I tell you, the next time. Give that signal over again, Baker."

The quarter-back chirped it out and Stone fell in behind Dolan as he raced for the end.

The scrub end dove under the mass, toppled it over, and Stone, who was close up, fell with it.

"You see?" he muttered as he rose to his feet.

"See!" snapped Bob, as he came running up. "I see you haven't got enough sense to keep from falling over your own feet. Why didn't you side-step?"

"There wasn't room," said Stone sullenly.

"You might have tried, anyway. Brace up!"

"I thought you told me to follow my in-

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terference," said Stone, putting on a puzzled look as though he was at a loss to catch just what the coach wanted him to do.

Bob controlled himself with an effort.

"The purpose of an end run is to gain ground," he said as though talking to a child. "Failing that, the next thing is to avoid losing it. A gain of twenty yards every third end play is worse than useless if you lose ten apiece on the others. Why? Because the loss on the two plays will make it necessary to kick.

"Therefore a half-back should trust to his interference to clear a path for him. If it doesn't it will at least bring him to the line, in most cases. Perhaps nothing is gained, but the loss, if any, is small. Not too much for a line plunge to regain. Understand?"

Stone nodded.

"Well, then, once in a blue moon your interference will clear a path for you. Then your twenty-yard gain will count."

Stone nodded again, and went sullenly back to his position. He appreciated the force of Bob's remarks, but didn't want to follow

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instructions, because he considered himself in a different class from most half-backs, and thought his ability should enable him to play entirely on inspiration. However, for the rest of the practice he did what he was told.

Foster and Benson were meanwhile having a merry fight for the guard position. Their work in the woods was telling. Both were far advanced in condition for so early in the year, and where other men were panting and casting longing glances at their captain to call a halt, both of these two stood the work easily.

To give each a fair chance, Bob was alternating them in practice, and as yet had formed no opinion. He hoped in the morrow's game against Newbury to come to some temporary decision.

The corps of rubbers was a busy set of men these days. The soft tissues of the squad developed bruises and strains in appalling numbers, and Jimmy and his assistants worked late every night before satisfying the demands of the many who refused to go to sleep without a massage.

Bob found that the love of the game, which

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for four years had been his dominant passion, entered into a different phase now that he was a coach.

At first he missed terribly the excitement of playing, the shock and surge of human masses, and above all the tense strain of playing before the crowd. He always donned a suit for practice and often displaced Baker at quarter-back for a few plays to illustrate some point he wished to make. On these occasions his old fire awoke, and the team found itself playing in a whirlwind fashion that Baker thus far had been unable to evoke. Then when he would step back, the task of coaching would seem unprofitable and stale, and his heart would ache at the thought that he was a "has-been."

As the days wore on, however, and the eleven units began to form into the semblance of a team, the pleasure of the artist began to make his task more congenial, and as he moulded his raw material, he sensed the joy of creating.

It was during the Newbury game that this feeling first found expression.

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The game had started unsatisfactorily from a Warrington point of view, inasmuch as Newbury scored on a fumbled punt in the first few minutes of play and had held the white and black to an equal number of points in the first half.

This poor showing was due more to the team as a whole than to any individual, every runner with the ball being guilty of fumbling whenever a score seemed possible, and the line showing anything but the firmness it had against Merriton.

During the first intermission Coach Walters was busy.

Benson, who had played the first half, was replaced by Foster, Stone by Ames, who had been showing up well in practice, as a man who used his head, and Bob also made substitutions at right end and left half. The latter change, however, was more to save Fletcher, who was somewhat under the weather, than for doubt of his ability. Warrington needed that long leg for the kicking. There was no question of that.

When the eleven had been playing five

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minutes by the watch Bob knew he had molded well, and he began to look on the team for the first time as his property, his creation, something to be watched and worked over; to stay awake nights for, and all to give to the college a finished product in the success of which he could have no real share. The alumnus who gives his time to his college must indeed be an altruist.

In the short period of five minutes, Warrington had scored twice, and was marching down the field without a falter, intent on a third touch-down.

Assured that an easy victory was in sight, and that the team as a whole was playing good football, Bob spent his time in analyzing the play of the individuals.

Ames first claimed his attention. He was of medium height, broad shouldered and narrow hipped. Bob liked the way he carried himself. He stood crouching in his position, balanced on his toes, his eyes intent on the ball.

As it happened, his signal was given at that moment and Bob instinctively compared him

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with Stone. Ames was slower on the start, he concluded as he watched, but fully as fast after five yards.

“Good boy,” he said, half aloud.

Ames’ interference had been piled up by the Newbury end, but he instantly turned, not as Stone would have done, to the outside, but straight into the struggling line. The move caught the opposing tackle off his balance, and Ames nearly got clear. As it was he was downed with a yard gain.

“Good head work that,” murmured Bob. “The other would have lost us two yards.”

The spectators, however, did not appreciate the play, and saw nothing in it but an end run that had failed.

“Now if that had been Stone,” said a student sitting in the bleachers, “he would have skipped outside and gained twenty yards, the way he was doing in the first half.”

“He made a couple of fumbles, though,” objected his neighbor.

“Yes, I know. But any one can slip up that way once in a while. That doesn’t mean anything at the beginning of the season.

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What I like about him is his dash—his brilliancy.”

The bleacher critic was mistaken, however. Fumbling at any season of the year is a grave fault, and the subject occupied the minds of coach and captain that evening for a large part of their time.

“I don’t like it. Of course it may be only a flash in the pan,” said Bob, “and not mean anything. But it’s awfully dangerous to have a team doing it. The men lose their confidence.”

“They improved a lot in the second half.”

“Yes. Much steadier.”

“Could you get much of a line on the men?” asked Macklin as he studied a sheet giving the statistics of the squad.

“Not as much as I should like,” replied Bob, consulting the notes which he had jotted down during the progress of play. “Fisher at right end looks pretty good, though.”

“Yes. He smothered their end runs nicely. He’s my choice over Glave.”

“Well, that settles the right side of the line. For the present anyway. Now for the left.”

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"Benson or Foster?"

"I confess I don't know," said Walters openly. "Foster's extra weight would be very valuable. And yet I have not the confidence in him that I have in Tom Benson. At times on our trip he seemed to show a suspicion of a yellow streak."

"I know what you mean, Bob. I was watching him, too. But I don't think he is yellow. He was in bad condition when we started, and it made the work harder for him than for the rest of us."

"But he seemed to give up very easily," said Bob, still holding to his own view.

"Oh, that was because there wasn't sufficient incentive. It really made little difference whether we walked any given distance or not. Now football is different. I think you'll find he will hang on in the games."

"It isn't a question of incentive. Or at least it ought not to be, in my mind. It's simply a question of whether you have pride enough and grit enough to push on until you have finished what you have undertaken, no matter what effort it costs you. If you

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haven't it is easy to say, 'Oh, what's the use of my killing myself to walk a quarter mile further,' or 'to keep Essex from scoring.' Of course there isn't really any use. It's purely a question of determination to accomplish what you have set out to do, without counting the cost."

Bob paused for a moment after this long speech and then added, "And that's where I think Foster will disappoint us in the big games."

"He hasn't shown any sign of it yet."

"There has been no occasion. He has been up against second-rate guards whom he could take care of with one hand."

"That's true," agreed the captain. "Still I think his weight is worth taking a chance on."

"We don't have to decide yet. Let's keep playing them both."

"All right. How about Stone and Ames?"

"What do you think?" asked Bob, anxious to get an expression of opinion from Macklin before stating his own.

"Stone, to my mind. He has made some

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of the prettiest runs I have seen for a long time. No one else can touch him."

Macklin said this with an entirely settled air, and did not seem to doubt Walters' agreement.

"I am going to keep my eye on Ames," Bob said. "I think he will turn out the better of the two."

"You only think as yet?" said Macklin quizzically. "I trust you don't know."

"No, Mack. I am not going to exercise my prerogative yet. Wait a while."

Trelawney took a hand in the matter next day, after practice.

"What do you think of my protégé?" he asked.

"Pretty good man, Trel," said Bob, who was learning to be uncommunicative in anything touching the team. "But it's entirely too early to say anything definite."

"Well, I hope you use him. It would tickle old man Ames half to death to have Greg on the team. And," he added significantly, "it wouldn't be a bad thing for the university, either."

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Bob looked up sharply. It was on the tip of his tongue to ask Trelawney what he meant, but he nipped the question back in time, judging that it would be wiser for a coach not to know why it would be to the advantage of the university for a given man to make the team.

“It’s hard enough to be unbiased as it is,” he thought. “I had better let that sleeping dog lie.”

CHAPTER XVI

“ HALF A MILLION ”

BOB was not permitted, however, to remain long in ignorance of the meaning that lay behind Trelawney's remark. A loose-tongued alumnus meeting him in the street one day enlightened him.

Now Bob, for all his experience, had retained his naturally guileless disposition, and where another man would have jumped at once to the meaning of Trelawney's hint he, though vaguely aware of it, had not by any means grasped the whole. Consequently when the alumnus opened his eyes, he was aghast.

“ I hear young Ames is out for the team,” the former said easily after congratulating Bob on his work. “ Hope you are going to play him regularly at half. His father would probably give half a million to the college if his son makes the team.”

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“Meaning?”

“Oh, nothing, except that if Ames makes good, you kill two birds with one stone.”

Bob's face was a study. He was so astounded at the mere suggestion that anything but merit could win a place on the Warrington team, that he could hardly believe his ears. In fact, the idea appeared to him so outrageous, so inconceivable, that he feared his ears had made a mistake and contented himself by saying:

“Oh, he has a chance. He is shaping up pretty well.”

Whereat the alumnus went his way, confident that his suggestion had fallen on fallow ground and that Bob would play Ames if his game warranted it in the slightest.

If the alumnus had contented himself with his remark to Bob, it would have saved the latter much trouble, but he repeated it thoughtlessly to another alumnus, who had a younger brother in college, and the mischief was done.

The rumor spread that Warrington was to be represented by a team chosen for its influ-

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ential connections; that honest merit was no longer the only deciding factor, and that if Johnnie Stone didn't make right half-back it would be because his father couldn't endow the university.

Everybody laughed at first, but there were enough malcontents to keep the idea from oblivion, so that finally the college, still unwilling to credit such a state of affairs, nevertheless put the thought away, under its hat, and sat back to await developments.

When the rumor reached Bob he was furious.

“What a disgusting lot of people there are in the world. The idea of any one thinking such a thing, much less spreading it,” he said to Livingston.

“You are not going to let it warp your judgment, I hope. None of the decent men will give any weight to such a story.”

“No. I don't intend to let it bias me, of course,” said Bob indignantly. “But it makes the task of picking a team just that much more difficult. Confound them.”

Bob stared into space, an angry frown giv-

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ing his usually pleasant face an expression of brooding wrath which his friends seldom saw.

"Well," said Livingston at length, "of course if you just play Stone nothing more will be thought of it."

"But I don't think I can play him. My judgment to-night says Ames will prove the better man. Even if he doesn't, his friends will say I was afraid to give him the place. Either way, I'm in for it."

"Isn't it as much Macklin's decision as yours?"

"Yes, in a way. But I can't shove the rumpus off on his shoulders. I don't see why the fates won't let me have one year in peace. Last year it was the mix-up with Trelawney, and now this. Other men don't seem to have these troubles."

Bob rose impatiently and strode up and down the room.

"Perhaps," remarked Livingston keenly, "they avoid them by not going counter to public opinion."

Bob stopped his walk and faced his friend angrily.

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"Do you mean to say you think that the wiser course?" he blurted out.

"Don't get mad, Bob," said Livingston smiling up at him, "for I don't mean anything of the sort. If I thought you were the type of man to let public opinion swerve you from doing what you thought right, I wouldn't have the respect for you that I do hold. Nor do I think our friendship would have lasted all these years."

"Thank you, Liv," said Bob mollified. "I ought to have known better than to think you would advise the weak-kneed course."

"No," said Livingston. "Stick by your guns. Don't butt your head against a stone wall needlessly, but on the other hand don't avoid it when in the right, just because it is a stone wall. That's the principle I try to live up to."

"A pretty good working formula, too," assented Bob.

Macklin was also disturbed by the rumor, but not to the same extent, for believing that Stone was the better man, he foresaw nothing on which the tale could exist.

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As the days went by his faith seemed justified. Certainly Stone was the more brilliant of the two, and hardly a practice passed that he did not make a long run against the scrub. Bob, however, insisted that Ames should have an equal chance to show his capabilities. He saw that the boy was diffident, mistrustful of his own powers, and was working his heart out to gain the coveted position.

On the other hand, Stone not only was a good player, but knew it, and let every one else know it, so that his fame increased rapidly in the college, and his popularity as well, for he was clever enough to disguise his conceit in a wrapping of good fellowship.

"We are not getting ahead as fast as we should," said Macklin reflectively to the coach one afternoon as they walked on the field. "We haven't improved the last ten days at all."

The team had inevitably imbibed a little of the poison and was feeling the effects. This was evidenced by a certain insubordination.

"Bound to be a slump about now," returned Bob encouragingly. "Better now than

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later. Once we get the line-up settled things will improve. And I'm thinking that after the Coleport game we had better decide.”

“It's hard to say, though. When the rules committee change the game on you, the way they have done, who can tell the type of man needed to meet the new conditions?”

“I don't think we need let that bother us. A good man may develop quickly.”

“Yes, but the forward pass will be used a lot this year, and it takes an exceptionally sure man, it seems to me, to handle it. It's an awfully dangerous play unless it is well done.”

“Of course that must be considered, and considered well, but so far in practice no one has shown unusual ability for it. They are all on a par.”

“There is one thing we can be sure of,” said Macklin, as he watched Fletcher driving long twisting punts down the field.

“What's that?”

“The team that has a good kicker will have a bigger advantage than ever. You can't hope to gain consistently, against any team

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that is your equal, now that they have ruled out helping the runner. It will make every game a kicking duel."

"There is no doubt about that," assented Bob. "Though the new rules open the game a good bit."

"Open the game?" repeated Macklin sarcastically. "That has been the slogan for years. Open it and ruin it, I say."

"Well, the public wanted it," said Bob resignedly. "And the public pays the freight."

"You mean ——?"

"That we couldn't support a field like this if the public didn't come to see the games."

"It's all wrong. We are doing this for pleasure. We are not paid performers."

"Aren't we?" said Bob whimsically. "Sometimes it seems to me we are. Except that we don't handle any cash. We get a lot of benefits, and are looked after quite like any self-respecting professional."

"Get along with you, Bob," said Macklin, relieved to see a twinkle in Bob's eyes as he uttered these treasonable sentiments. "Some-

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times, when you talk like that, I think for a minute you really mean it.”

“Perhaps I do,” answered Bob, still with a twinkle in his eye, but there was an under-current of sadness in his tone.

Bob devoted much of the practice to the forward pass in its less complicated forms. He was of no mind to reveal to any chance onlooker the more involved formations over which he and the captain had been working. They were to be saved for Kingston and Essex, when an unexpected trick might well win the day. They were to be practiced only behind closed gates.

Baker showed improvement in his passing this particular afternoon, and hurled the pig-skin to the waiting half-back with an accuracy which was a relief to Bob. He had been worried about this pivotal position.

The first pass Stone took on the dead run, and with the advantage this start gave him, easily outstripped the scrub backs and raced forty yards for a touch-down.

The students in the stand let out a cheer.

But Stone's second attempt at the forward

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pass was not so successful. Baker did his part perfectly, but the half-back was late again in getting into position, and saved the ball only by diving for it. He was tackled instantly. The third time he was in position, no opponent near him, the ball came hurtling through the air over the mass of struggling players, into his very arms, and—he fumbled it.

At the latter end of practice, Bob substituted Ames in Stone's position. Newton in the stand took his feet down and began to observe the play more closely. Many of the students leaned forward and seemed waiting for the first misplay to jeer at Ames' champion.

Three times Baker called the signal for a forward pass, three times he hurled the ball at the place where Ames should be. Each time the latter was in position waiting all alert for the pass, each time he caught it cleanly and was tackled on his second stride.

"Huh!" grunted Alden, a junior. "Do you think much of that? Slow as molasses."

"What was wrong with it?" inquired Newton.

"Wrong with it?" ejaculated the other

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contemptuously. “Wrong with it? To catch a forward pass three times and not make a single gain!”

“He caught it, anyway,” replied Newton dispassionately. And then with a detached air, as though speaking largely to himself, “Baker’s pass was for six yards,—on the average. Three times six is eighteen. Eighteen yards seems to me like some gain.”

Alden scowled at him. “Ames didn’t make the gain.”

“No, but he put the plug in it,” said Newton, and resumed his watch of the play.

“And trust Newt for putting the plug in any hot-air artist like Alden,” said Tommy Kidder who, sitting a few rows back, had overheard the exchange of courtesies. “You won’t get much change out of him!”

“Hello there, Kidder,” said the grave voice of Livingston, who was walking up the aisle. “What mischief is hatching under your hat this year?”

“Oh,” returned Kidder demurely, “I’m a senior this year. Have to preserve my dignity. “Going in for uplift.”

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"Uplift?" Livingston raised his eyebrows.

"Yes. Do good to my fellow man and all that."

"Don't, I beg of you, Tommy, change your formula. To give the college a hearty laugh once a year is doing more than your share of 'uplift,' as you call it. I know I have come to look to you to lift my spirits annually."

"Hm," grinned Tommy. "I thank you, kind sir, for your fair-spoken words. Believe me, I shall give them attention. You make me see my past in a new light."

Notwithstanding the efforts of Newton and others of the best type of Warringtonians to minimize the criticism against Bob on account of Ames, the subject would not down. Daily the stands filled with a mass of students who were urging the claims of Johnnie Stone, and vented their partisanship by ringing cheers for their idol whenever the least occasion offered.

In this surcharged atmosphere Bob Walters and Macklin found it difficult to maintain an even poise.

Where the merits of two men are nearly

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balanced, a coach must make his choice almost by intuition. He will allow certain intangible qualifications, difficult to put into words and impossible of use in defending the choice, to weigh the scale in favor of one or the other. The best coaches do not formulate reasons for all their acts. Consequently a coach should be as free as possible from unskilled criticism.

The Coleport game made the choice no easier. For the first time that season Warrington met a sturdy resistance. Though the white and black had no real difficulty in winning, the touch-downs were rare enough to make the crowd anxious and receptive of any big gain. Consequently when Stone made a touch-down on a forward pass after a brilliant run, the students rose to him, and nothing that Ames could do when he came on in Stone's place could call forth a murmur.

“Am I wrong, after all?” thought Bob as he paced the side lines. “Have I become pigheaded and able to see only one side of the question? Is Stone the more valuable man?”

Yet he could not make himself believe it.

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Ames handled himself so well ; had such an air of steadiness about him ; had made so few mistakes. But he was not brilliant.

“ Blessed if I can make up my mind,” Bob said impatiently. First of all, he of course wanted to pick the best man. That went without saying. So far as the two men went, he would rather see Ames on the team. On the other hand Ames was tarred, no matter how innocently, with the misplaced suggestion of influence of his friends. Bob’s inclination was naturally against a man so brought to his notice. Again, was it fair to the boy to allow this to weigh against him? Certainly not. Bob felt that strongly. So strongly in fact that he was troubled with the unpleasant thought that he was going to the other extreme.

When his thoughts had brought him to this dead end he kicked pettishly at the turf and strove to fix his mind on something else.

On the field the team was fighting hard to make one more touch-down. Bob’s eye roved over the machine he had assembled and made note of apparent weaknesses.

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“Tom seems to be holding his own,” he thought, as he saw Dolan make a five-yard gain through the left side of the line. “Tom opened a nice hole that time.”

If Benson could have known this thought it would have comforted him not a little. For he did not think he was holding his own. His opponent, a beefy individual, outweighing him thirty pounds, had given him no easy task. Benson was by far the quicker, but it was only occasionally he could make use of this advantage, while the huge bulk opposed to him was a constant menace.

“Foster held him,” he muttered between his teeth as he met the shock of the other’s lunge. “So I must. If my weight can’t, my brains shall!” But try as he might every artifice known to him or invented on the spot, he knew that he was only breaking even. Even to do this he was forced to exert himself to the utmost.

“Oh, for another ten pounds!” That was his constant thought as he tired and felt his quickness leaving him.

The whistle blew in a weary man’s ears, but

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mingled with relief at the sound was the dread conviction that Foster had increased his lead for the position by that day's play.

As he came from the shower-bath disaster overtook him. Disaster that he had known was at his heels, but which he had hoped to escape.

McLane strolled up and looked him over as the rubber plied his trade.

"Get on the scales, Tom," he said. "You're looking thin to me."

Tom stepped dolefully on the platform. No need for him to look at the bar. He knew.

"One hundred and seventy-eight pounds," read off McLane. "Losing weight, aren't you?"

"Guess I sweated that off to-day," said poor Benson. "I'll have it back to-morrow."

"Working you too hard," said McLane kindly. "I'll tell Bob to ease up on you a bit."

Ease up on him a bit! Tom knew what that meant, and he finished his dressing in a deep fit of the blues.

CHAPTER XVII

A DISAPPOINTMENT

"GREAT game you're playing, Johnnie. You ought to have that position cinched."

"I don't want to count my chickens, Alden," retorted Stone cheerfully as he stopped at the other's greeting. "A couple of others are pushing me hard."

"Nothing to it!" affirmed Alden positively. "You've got Ames beaten a mile."

"Well, I wouldn't say that exactly," objected Stone with humorous gravity. "Call it a furlong!"

"It's a winning lead, whatever you call it," retorted the other. "That is, unless there is crooked work at the finish," he added meaningfully.

"Oh, I don't think we need bother about all that. Money won't cut any figure in this."

"I'm not worrying. If Mr. Gotrox, Junior, had had more experience I might, but as it

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is—— He is a good steady plodding player, but that's about all."

"Well, I hope you get it," said Alden. "The whole college is wishing you luck."

In making this sweeping statement Alden was drawing on his imagination, for the majority of the students were quite content to abide by the choice of the coach, but Stone was not loath to accept the compliment at its full value and continued to the dormitories, his head in the air.

This was but a sample of the speeches he heard constantly, so that as the days passed, he came to feel that in fact there was no real competition for his position, and he grew disgruntled at Bob's action in playing Ames for half the time spent in practice.

Tidings that Kingston was to send down an unusually strong team caused Bob many a sleepless night, and as the daily practice showed but slow improvement, he looked forward to the game with acute nervousness. Warrington had shown a powerful attack against the weaker teams, but its defense had not been tested, and what the men would do

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under the strain of a close battle he could only guess.

"I'll feel a lot easier Saturday night," he confided to Macklin as they sat talking in the latter's room the Thursday before the game. "We may come up to the scratch, and we may go all to pieces if Kingston presses us closely."

"Oh, no, Bob. There is not much chance of that," said Macklin. "We have too many veterans on the team. They'll stop any panic."

"It's not panic I am afraid of. It's laziness. If things go wrong it is usually the veteran who lacks the enthusiasm to overcome big odds."

"Well, Saturday will tell," said Macklin. "But I am not worried that the team won't do its best."

"Is its best good enough?"

"Don't know. But I have faith in it. How about those undecided positions?"

"I'm afraid we need the extra weight Foster will give us," replied Bob thoughtfully. "He is your choice, is he not?"

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"Yes, decidedly. I have watched him closely, and haven't seen any signs of shirking. It was his lack of condition that gave you that impression in the woods, I am sure."

"Well, maybe you are right," agreed Bob, willing to be convinced, though he could not help the thought that ran through his brain. "He has had no cause for shirking yet."

"How about right half-back?"

"That's an open question. But I thought we would let Stone start the game."

"All right. I think you will end by agreeing with me that he is the man for the place."

"I am not so sure of that," retorted Bob, moving toward the door. "I must be off now. My legal studies are suffering from lack of attention."

"Working you hard?"

"They would if I gave them the chance," replied Bob over his shoulder as he left the room. "But so far they have not seen much of me."

In his own rooms, he found Newton and Livingston hard at work.

"What's that you are poring over, Newt?"

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he asked, looking down at the fat volume Newton was studying.

"Anatomy," said the other abstractedly, and resumed his air of concentration.

"Talk to a man for a moment, can't you?" said Bob, drawing up a chair. "You two have developed into fearful close-mouths."

Livingston laughed.

"Sorry, Bob," he said leaning back in his chair and poising his book on his knee, "but these graduate courses don't allow much time for frivolous conversation. I am surprised you haven't found that out for yourself already."

"Oh, I have," admitted Bob. "But I find coaching a football team a bar to concentration on any other subject."

"If I know anything of the requirements of the law school, it will go hard with you later," commented his friend.

"I know it will. Another year I won't attempt coaching. The work is piling up on me in a fearful way," Bob said dolefully as he opened his law book and began reading a case. "This legal jargon is hard as the deuce

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at first. Almost as bad as that old English you're so fond of."

"It's no use trying to study," interrupted Newton, "with you fellows gabbing in my ear." And he pushed his book away from him and leaned back. "How is the coaching going?"

"Fair. But I didn't come here to talk football. I came to study."

"I like that!" exclaimed Newton indignantly. "When you begin by calling us close-mouths."

"Perhaps he doesn't know what he wants," hazarded Livingston, taking note of a crease on Bob's forehead which had the air of being a fixture.

"You are about right," confessed Bob throwing down his guard. "I'm a bit up in the air to-night."

"Responsibilities getting on your nerves?"

"Oh, it isn't the coaching, or fear of defeat that worries me, but it is of a different kind. If they would only let me alone ——"

"They?"

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“The alumni—they are always butting in!”

“Not harping still on the Ames-Stone matter?” said Livingston, raising his eyebrows in disgust.

“Yes. Confound them. There are powerful interests at work to see that Ames makes the team.”

“How do they dare suggest such a thing?” said Newton indignantly.

“Oh, they don’t suggest it,” replied Bob wearily. “They say nothing you could pin them down to. Just hints here and there that Ames is playing well and ought to make the team; that Mr. Ames is wrapped up in the success of his boy; that it would be so nice to have Gregory make the team—oh, a hundred hints of that character. And a lot of such talk comes back to the students, of course.”

“What attitude does the boy himself take?”

“Gregory? Oh, he’s all right. Good stuff, clear through. He would rather not make the team than do it on his father’s money.”

“He knows of the rumor, I suppose?” said Newton interrogatively.

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"Yes. Got mighty hot over it, too. Came to me and apologized. Feels very badly that he should be concerned in such a rumor."

"Too bad that such a thing ever got started."

"Much too bad," agreed Bob gravely and picked up his book again.

When the team straggled into the gymnasium on Saturday after a light lunch, the men crowded, with common consent, around a notice pinned to the door. It contained the names of the men who had been selected to start the game against Kingston.

"It looks as though Johnnie had it," remarked Fisher as he read Stone's name opposite right half-back. "They will hardly make any changes after this game."

Ames had, with his usual diffidence, refrained from joining the others around the placard, but read the coach's decision in the jubilant air which Stone assumed as he passed him.

His heart sank, and for a moment he was tempted to stop dressing, but his better self quickly reasserted its control, and he went on

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lacing up a shoe with as much precision as ever, though his lips were drawn into a tight line.

"Foster goes in at guard," he heard his neighbor say in an undertone, and straightening up he looked across at Benson to see how he was taking the defeat of his hopes. What he saw gave him instant command over his feelings.

Benson was sitting on a bench, apparently care-free, joking with some of the other men. Nothing in his attitude indicated that he had just met with a bitter disappointment. His laughter was natural, unstrained, and Ames, as he looked, admired, while reviling himself.

"If he, first sub last year, can stand being beaten out for the place by a newcomer, I guess I can take my medicine," and by the time he had finished dressing his mouth had resumed its natural lines.

When the team took the field in response to the referee's warning, the horseshoe of seats had become a close-packed mass of color, which burst into bloom as Macklin ran out at the head of his men.

"An enthusiastic crowd," remarked New-

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ton turning in his seat, which by virtue of being a roommate of the coach was on the side lines.

Livingston, who sat beside him, nodded.

"It is always a wonder to me how similar all football crowds are. There seems to be a type of face which belongs to the football spectator and no one else."

"Yes," agreed Newton. "But you are getting a little deep for me. Here comes Trelawney," he added.

"Every inch the stockbroker," commented Livingston as he watched the old guard's approach.

"Quite the dresser, Trel," said Newton. "You must be making money down your way."

"Fair, my son, only fair," replied Trelawney calmly, ruffling Newton's hair with his big hand. "But you have to dress to make a success in our business."

His attention turned to the field, where the teams were getting into position.

"Hello! that's a promising start."

Trelawney rose from his seat. A Kingston

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back had fumbled the kick-off, and the ball was downed on the twenty-five yard line.

“Now let’s see what they can do with Bob’s pupils.”

Not much, it seemed, for after two futile attempts to gain a punt soared toward the Warrington goal. Stone was well under it, and eluding the Kingston ends made a fifteen-yard gain.

Baker tried a forward pass at once and Fletcher, catching it, planted the ball twenty yards further on.

“That’s going some!” remarked Trelawney appreciatively. “I thought some one said Kingston was going to give us a good fight.”

“May yet,” said Newton, his eyes on the play.

“Sure. Just look at that, though!” yelled Trelawney waving his hat madly.

“That” was a wide end run by Stone, who circled his opponents for thirty yards and a touch-down.

“Too easy! Watch us eat ’em up!”

The Warrington stand went crazy at this easy score, and Stone’s name rolled out in a

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succession of volleys, on the end of the Warrington cheer.

"Bully work!" said Trelawney settling back in his seat. "That man Stone is fast."

As the game continued the vaunted strength of Kingston failed to materialize, and, far from being a close struggle, the contest developed into a runaway match. At every point Warrington showed its superiority.

"This isn't going to be a victory," remarked Trelawney at half-time, as he joined the throng walking toward the gymnasium. "It's a rout!"

"Picnic, isn't it?" said Dolan as Trelawney stopped in front of where the full-back was sitting. "It is like going through cheese when you strike that line. Wish you were with us to enjoy it."

Trelawney grinned. "Wish I were. It does look easy. How big a score are you going to roll up?"

"Oh, about twenty more points," answered Macklin for him, his face bubbling with good humor.

"Going to make any substitutions?"

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"I think not," replied the captain. "The team looks good to me as it is. Come over here a bit," he added drawing Trelawney out of ear-shot of the others. "What's your opinion?"

"You mean as to the line-up?"

"Yes. What do you think of Stone?"

"Playing brilliantly. No question about that. Foster seems to be doing well, too."

"Then you think those two the best choice?"

Trelawney temporized. "I can't go that far," he said. "I have not been out at practice enough to be a fair judge. How does Stone stand up under a gruelling?"

"Seems to be all right."

"Well, I have no suggestions to offer, Mack," said Trelawney finally after a moment's thought. "There is certainly nothing to criticize to-day."

"That's right, isn't it?" exclaimed Macklin enthusiastically. "I didn't think the team had so much up its sleeve. I am mighty well pleased with the men, I can tell you."

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"All right, Mack?" Bob Walters came striding up, and Trelawney noticed that his face did not bear the same marks of enthusiasm.

"Well, Trel, glad to see you. Making a show of Kingston, aren't we?"

Then, without waiting for the other's answer, he turned to Macklin.

"Better get 'em out, Mack; the referee will be in here after you in a minute."

As Trelawney walked back to the field, he conned over in his mind the possible reasons for Bob's apparent dissatisfaction.

"I can't make it out," he said to himself. "But something has upset Bob's plans, that's certain. I'll get Liv to worm it out of him to-night."

The last part of the game was very similar to what had gone before. For a time, it is true, Kingston, apparently as a result of a severe scolding administered by the coach during the intermission, braced up and gained several first downs. The cheers of her supporters, however, that burst out at this first sign of encouragement, died a quick death

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when a fumble gave the ball to Warrington and smothered the incipient rally.

"Nothing to it," was Trelawney's estimate after that play, and the final score of thirty-six to nothing justified the remark.

"Something is worrying Bob," he volunteered to Livingston as they parted at the entrance to the field. "See if you can find out what it is."

"Why, this game ought to clear up all his doubts," exclaimed Livingston. "I think I'll find him very cheerful."

"No, you won't," prophesied the other. "This game has added to them, or I miss my guess," and he joined the throng streaming cityward.

Livingston walked thoughtfully to his rooms, considering Trelawney's remark, but being able to make neither head nor tail to it, wisely dropped it from his mind, till he could solve the problem by a direct question.

Bob, as was his custom, had dinner with the team, and then went to Macklin's room for a conference, so that it was ten o'clock before he stalked into Livingston's presence.

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A quick glance showed Trelawney's forecast to be correct. Bob was disappointed about something.

The coach flung himself into a chair and stared moodily at the floor. For a time there was silence. Then Livingston hazarded a remark.

"Good work this afternoon, Bob. You ought to feel very well satisfied."

"Yes. The team did do well," Bob answered absently, and relapsed into silence.

Having learnt nothing here, Livingston tried another tack.

"Stone was quite a star, I thought."

"Hm!" said Bob.

Feeling, from Bob's doubtful assent to what was to all appearances a patent fact that he was on the right track, Livingston persisted.

"It seems to me that his playing this afternoon ought to settle the doubts you had."

"No, confound it," exclaimed Bob striking the arm of his chair with an open palm, roused out of his silence at last. "That is just what the game didn't do."

"Why?"

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“It’s all the fault of Kingston. I had a right to expect they’d send a strong team down and give us a fight. Instead they send down an aggregation we can wade right through. I knew Stone was brilliant against a weak team. I wanted to watch him against a strong one. And now here we are with Essex only two weeks off, and I don’t know any more about his backbone than I did yesterday. It’s a shame!”

CHAPTER XVIII

SECRET PRACTICE

AFTER the Kingston game the college considered as settled the question as to who was going to fill the position of right half-back for the rest of the season. Able critics as most of the undergraduates deemed themselves to be, and vociferously as they declared their opinions on the running of the team, they were unable to imagine, much less discern, the difficulties which confronted Bob in making a final selection of the man to play against Essex. Thus, being unable to see beyond the very visible fact that Stone had brilliant qualities as a half-back, they considered the matter closed, and proceeded to pooh-pooh the idea that the coach intended to play any one else, and even forgot the fact that they had at one time thought so. As a natural result the rumor of undue influence

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slumbered and seemed about to pass from all minds.

During the week succeeding the victory over Kingston, Bob persisted in playing Ames during part of the practice. And though this course was criticized in some quarters, as tending to waste time precious for the development of team work, it was considered to mean nothing more than that Stone was trained down too fine, and that he was being saved as much as possible.

Bob began to feel the combined strain of the coaching and studying. In former years, he had his time to himself except when actually playing, and even when he had been captain and his duties were almost as heavy as now, the fact that his studies were largely only an advance on what he had already studied made it possible to cover much ground in short periods of study.

Now, however, he was studying practically a new language, and in these early weeks much time was naturally consumed in making himself master of the different terms; terms with which he must be intimate before

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he could hope to master the principles of law with which they concerned themselves. As a result, many nights saw him still at work at midnight, when his eyes were heavy with sleep.

"Just listen to this, Liv," he said one afternoon when he was snatching a spare hour to study before he would be needed on the field. "Tenant in fee-tail special. This book is full of gibberish of that sort."

"What are you reading?"

"The commentaries of the worthy Sir William Blackstone."

"What does tenant in fee, etc., mean?"

"Don't know," said Bob with a chuckle. "The name brought me up all standing. But as far as I can make out it doesn't mean anything. It should be apparently 'tenant in tail after possibility of issue extinct,' to describe the situation adequately."

"Well, what does that mean?"

"Don't ask me! I'll let you know, though, when I have solved the puzzle."

"That stuff sounds difficult, but I am not sure that it is any worse than this early Eng-

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lish I am working over," said Livingston as he threw down his Chaucer. "I have to keep a dictionary at my elbow."

"What are you two grumbling over?" asked Newton, who came in at that moment diffusing an odor of disinfectants.

"The difficulties of our respective branches of higher education," volunteered Bob. "But where on earth have you been? You smell like a hospital."

"Do you notice it?" retorted Newton calmly. "Well, that's one of the difficulties of my branch of the higher education. Dissecting room."

"Dissecting room?" exclaimed Livingston.

"It must be disagreeable work," commented Bob.

"It is. The room smells like the deuce. Though they tell me it is nothing now to what it will be later in the year."

Bob laughed. "We'll take your word for the rest. You needn't continue. I'm off, anyway," he added, glancing at the clock. "My charges are waiting for me."

"I think I'll come too," said Newton.

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"Sorry, Newt, can't let you," said Bob briefly. "Secret practice to-day. Gates will be closed till four o'clock."

"Jove, you're getting important. Think you might let your old friends in. Don't you, Liv?"

"Can't show favoritism. Some of my bleacher critics would take exception to it. Can't be too careful these days," retorted Bob, with a touch of bitterness.

Once on the field he and Macklin wasted no time in setting the men to work.

"Every one this way!" Bob called to the scattered groups who were amusing themselves in various ways.

"I am going to give you some new plays," he announced as the squad gathered round him. "Get in your positions and we'll run through them slowly. Punt formation."

The men formed in position, Fletcher dropping back as though he were going to kick.

"The signal for this play will be 81. It is a forward pass on a fake kick. Fletcher, when you get the ball, run to left end, Dolan and Baker interfering for you. Stone

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will drop back five yards and receive the pass from Fletcher. If he has the chance he will then make a forward pass to Fisher, who will be fifteen yards down the field on the right side. Understand?"

His hearers nodded.

"All right then. Line up for a scrimmage. Signal, Baker."

"43—2—81—9," chirped the quarter-back.

"Only walk through it at first, fellows," cautioned Bob as the play started.

As Fletcher secured the ball he started for the end, turned as he reached his position, and shot the ball back to Stone, who immediately passed it across the line to Fisher.

"That's good," said Bob, pleased. "It looks as if it might work out, Mack."

"Yes," agreed the captain. "But Fisher must be slower getting in position. If they see him waiting for it, they will expect the pass."

"That's right, Mack," said Bob, after a moment's thought. "Try it again, and, Fisher, time yourself so as to get in place just as Stone makes the pass."

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Again the team walked through the play.

"Better," said Bob critically. "Now stow that away in your heads and I'll give you another. This is a variety of end run and pass. Signal is 71. Ball is passed to Fletcher as if for end run. Play is to the right. Fox crosses from left end behind opponent's line to right end and Fletcher makes pass to him when he can. See! Now try it.

"Of course," Bob continued after the play had been run off, "if you can get clear, Fletch, you don't make the pass, but just keep on as if it were an ordinary end run."

Fletcher nodded. "I'm just to use my own judgment, as I understand it."

"Exactly. In fact," Bob raised his voice, "in nearly all plays employing the forward pass I shall expect the man with the ball to use his judgment. And your value to the team depends on how good that judgment is."

The work went busily on. One by one Bob unfolded the plays over which he and Macklin had been spending their evenings in the whole-hearted desire to leave no pos-

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sibility unsearched for in the maze of the new rules. On the whole Bob was pleased by the way the plays worked out in practice, and by the keenness of the squad in becoming familiar with them. For an hour and a half he drove the men through signal practice until each man understood just where he should be and doing at a given time. Then he called for the scrub team and stood back anxiously to watch how his inventions would stand the test of actual play.

For a time Baker contented himself with the plays they had been using every day. Then with the ball near the center of the field he barked out "17—8—81—9."

The team, recognizing the test, gathered itself. A ripple of concentration passed over the men. Fletcher sprang back into position. As he held out his hands Calder passed the ball. Pausing a moment to draw his opponents toward him, Fletcher then started. The scrub had not been deceived by the play thus far and Fletcher saw his interference go down in a heap. Instantly he turned and shot the ball to Stone, who stood waiting, unguarded

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by any opponent. The half-back made the catch cleanly, and as a belated scrub-man dove for him passed it over the heads of the struggling mass to where Fisher was standing.

The strategy of the play was a complete success. Bob grinned with delight as he saw Fisher reach his position with the members of the scrub all drawn to the other side of the field. But though the strategy was a success the actual working of the play was not. Stone had ample time to make the pass but, misjudging both distance and direction, threw wild. Fisher made a frantic effort to reach the ball, but succeeded in touching it only with his finger-tips, and the ball rolled directly in the path of an opponent, who promptly fell on it.

Bob stamped his foot in vexation at the spoiling of his hopes, but was satisfied with the play beyond his expectation.

"That will work against Essex," he said to Macklin, "if it is played perfectly."

By the end of the afternoon Bob's knowledge of tactical possibilities was decidedly increased. Of six plays which he had evolved

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for the humbling of Essex, two had been proved successful, one a possibility and three complete failures.

"We will have to work up some more," he announced to the captain as they walked off the field. "Get your gray matter working."

Macklin groaned. "I have exhausted it," he said. "I stay awake at night trying to hit on something novel, but the idea always eludes me."

"Same here," admitted Bob. "I dreamt a play the other night. It was a peach, too, but in the morning of course I couldn't recapture it. I'm sure we would have beaten Essex with it."

"Going to work to-night?"

"Yes. We had better. Come over to my rooms for a change. I think the others will be out."

"How is the weight, Tom?" asked Macklin as in stepping into the dressing-rooms they found Benson just rubbing down.

The latter made a grimace. "Nothing doing. I'm holding my own, but that is about all."

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"I'll have to get McLane to prescribe a special diet for you," said Bob critically. "How about it, McLane?" he added, turning to the trainer. "Can't you think up some special delicacies to put a few pounds on Benson?"

"What's that? Why, yes, I guess so. I'll give you something extra good every night this week. Remind me of it if I forget."

Benson grinned as he turned to the bench. "Some consolations in being over-trained after all, Foster," he said. "Did you hear that?"

"Lucky dog!" growled Foster.

At nine o'clock Bob and Macklin were deep in football problems. Bob got out a set of checkers and maneuvered the pieces into different positions, trying to obtain a combination which bore the semblance of practical success.

"How about that?" asked Macklin shifting one of the men. "He will cover the half while this man ——"

"No, that won't do," broke in Bob. "A fumble would leave a clear field for a touchdown. You must make these plays safe first

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of all. We need that man to cover up mistakes. See?"

Macklin nodded reluctantly.

"Now," continued Bob, "if on the other hand you bring this man 'round, and move the end in we overcome that difficulty."

"Yes, and you give an open path to Essex's left tackle," commented the captain.

"Bother! You're right."

They were in the midst of this complex game when the silence of the house was broken by some one singing in a loud voice,

"She spanked him with a shingle ——"

"I hope it is no visitor for this room," said Bob as he listened.

"Which made his trousers tingle—
Because he slapped his little baby brother
He went crying down the lane
For it really gave him pain
And a boy's best friend is his mother!"

The song ended with a crash, the door opened, and Kidder stuck his head in.

"Hello, peoples!" he said. "A well-mean-

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ing, but misguided relative of mine has just shipped me a barrel of oysters. It's up in my room now. I came to inquire if your high and mightynesses would condescend to join a democratic oyster party."

"Raw?"

"Nope. Roast."

"Roast?"

"Yep! Got a large fire in my room and some good flat stones. Sound good?"

"Rather!" said Bob smacking his lips.

"Will you come?"

Bob looked at Macklin interrogatively.

"I'll drop over for a minute, Tommy," said the captain. "It wouldn't do for me to be seen late at one of your parties."

"I'll come though, and stay late, if the oysters are good," said Bob. "My brain is fagged working on this stuff."

"Oysters are good for the brain," announced Tommy. "Eat a dozen and evolve a play. That's the ticket."

"All right, Dr. Kidder. I'm with you."

CHAPTER XIX

“ 4-26-81-9 ”

THE dressing-rooms were deserted the next afternoon except for Jimmy, the rubber, who was laying out the football suits, which he had just taken from the drying room. Jimmy was whistling, for with all his cares he was in a good humor. The end of the season was in sight. Ten days more, two games, and his work would be over. Then he could rest until the track candidates needed him.

“ You seem gay, Jimmy,” said Benson, coming in and hanging up his coat preparatory to undressing. “ Some one left you a fortune? ”

“ No, Mr. Benson,” returned Jimmy grinning. “ It’s just that the season is getting on. I’m sure weary of rubbing. Oh, if they was all as nice as you, Mr. Benson, it wouldn’t be bad, but some of the gentlemen do carry on scandalous when I get into their sore spots. It’s ‘ Confound you, Jimmy, be careful,’ most of

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the time with them," and Jimmy trotted off to the drying room for another armful of clothes.

"Hello, Gregory! You're down early too, are you?"

Ames nodded a greeting as he came in. "Yes; I like to be on time," he said.

Benson smiled. "In the hope that your principal won't turn up, eh, and that you'll get a chance?" he said quizzically.

Ames flushed.

"Don't get red over it," went on Benson kindly. "I have just the same idea myself. I am always hoping Foster will fade away somewhere, break a leg or something."

"Do you really feel that way?" said Ames eagerly. "And is it all right? I have been ashamed of my feelings. Of course I want the team to win, and if Bob thinks Stone is better, I don't really want anything to happen, but I can't help wishing it just would."

Benson laughed. "You needn't feel ashamed of those feelings. No man with red blood in him and a love of the game could be without them. You can rest assured that if positions

were reversed Stone or Foster would be harboring exactly the same blood-thirsty sentiments.”

Ames looked relieved. “It’s too bad you can’t put on those extra fifteen pounds, Benson,” he said diffidently. “I’d like to see you at left guard.”

“Thanks, Greg,” said Benson, touched by this unexpected good-fellowship. “I certainly would like to see myself there. But I have no chance. We need the weight in the line. And in other ways Foster is just as good as I am.”

“I’m not so sure,” said Ames shaking his head.

“What do you know about it, Kid?” retorted Benson banteringly. “When did you set up for an expert?”

“Oh, I am not,” disclaimed the other quickly. “But I think you are much quicker, and it doesn’t seem to me that we do need so much weight in the line. This new game is different. And then ——” he hesitated.

“Go on,” encouraged Benson.

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"I think you fight harder," blurted out Ames.

Benson looked thoughtful for a moment. Then he smiled cheerfully. "Oh, no. Joe is quite a fighter when he gets started. But you are not out of the running yet by a long shot, Gregory. Keep your spirits up, fight hard and you may win out yet. I hope you do. Hello, Stone, feeling fit?"

The half-back had appeared in the doorway, and Benson looking at him had an unpleasant impression that he had overheard the conversation.

However, Stone said nothing, and the other two having finished their dressing, went out on the field just as the main body of the squad came tumbling into the room, late for practice, as usual.

Stone's eyes narrowed as he watched them leave the room.

"So," he muttered to himself sneeringly, "so Messrs. Benson and Ames are out gunning for my position and Joe's. I'll just tell Joe that his good friend Benson will stand watching."

He waited his opportunity, which came as

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the men were walking toward the training house after practice.

Stone saw Foster ahead of him, and called to him.

“ Oh, Joe! What’s the hurry? Wait a minute.”

“ What’s up? ”

“ Oh, nothing much. But I happened to overhear Ames and Benson discussing us. They seem to think we are poor players—that they would do much better in our places.”

“ No? ” Foster’s voice expressed unbelief that any one was not satisfied with his playing.

“ Fact, I assure you. They don’t know I overheard them, and I just thought I’d let you know, so you could keep your eyes open. I don’t want to insinuate anything against the authorities, but I’d hate to see you lose your place from favoritism.”

“ Hm ! ” grunted the guard.

“ Of course I know Ames is running me a close race —— ”

“ Close race ! ” Foster was quite as indignant at the idea as Stone had hoped he would be. “ He isn’t in your class ! ”

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"Oh, yes, he is." Stone was becomingly modest. "And that's why I am afraid of there being any favoritism. It might easily give Ames my place."

"The rest of the team wouldn't stand for anything of that sort."

"They might have to. However, I only spoke to you about it because I thought you ought to know. You are closer to Macklin and Walters than I am, and can watch which way the wind blows to better advantage."

"I'll watch all right," said Foster with determination, flattered at being appealed to by the brilliant player. "And I'll see that there is no underhand work."

Their conversation perforce came to an end at the training house, but Stone felt that his insinuations had fallen on fertile ground, and was satisfied that he had secured for himself one more anchor to windward in case of squalls.

The team assembled in the dressing-rooms on Saturday afternoon in the best of spirits.

Pentland was not a rival to be much feared, and the nervousness which was usually pres-

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ent had given place to serene cheerfulness and confidence of an easy victory, which gave the room a gala appearance.

Macklin, to whom the approach of a game was a signal for anxious forebodings, wore this day a clear countenance, and firm in the belief of the superiority of his men, felt that this day he could enjoy himself, and enjoy the game, free from care, as he had been accustomed to do before he assumed the duties of the captaincy.

Bob was in close converse with Baker on the plan of battle, but from his casual air he seemed also to think the victory won, as indeed he did.

“Don’t use any of those 71 and 81 plays,” he cautioned the quarter-back. “There is sure to be some one here from Essex, and we don’t want to give them away. I don’t expect you will need them, anyway. The simple ones ought to gain enough ground. From all I hear Pentland isn’t very formidable this year. And they will hardly catch us napping as they did last time.”

The team ran through its signals with zest,

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and needed not the roar from the stands to fill its members with ambition. But the roar of cheers from the closely-packed students changed quickly to silent dismay when the game opened.

Fletcher kicked off. It was a good kick, long, though a trifle low. The Pentland full-back caught it, swung in behind his interference, which formed with unusual swiftness, and was fifteen yards up the field before the first wearers of the white and black came within reaching distance. In quick succession Fox and Fisher were swept aside and left sprawling. The phalanx kept on without the loss of a man. Macklin swept one interferer aside, but failed to reach the runner. Then, in a broken field of tacklers, the interference swerved to the right, fought its way by the rest of the Warrington team, and before the echo of the cheer which had greeted the kick-off had more than died away, the Pentland full-back, with two interferers, was bearing down at full speed on Fletcher, the only man in the way of a touch-down.

Fletcher did his best, but the odds were too

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great. He plunged into the trio hoping to impede the runner if unsuccessful in tackling him. But the interferers smothered him, and the next moment the score-keeper was marking up five points for Pentland.

“I’ll be jiggered!” ejaculated Newton, who was sitting up in the stand among the students.

“That’s the first time I have ever seen that happen against Warrington,” volunteered Livingston. “I don’t see yet how it happened.”

“Team must be asleep,” growled Newton. “That was awful.”

Bob, on the side lines, was for a moment stupefied at the suddenness of the catastrophe. Then it struck him as rather a joke and he smiled grimly. “It looks as though the team might have that try-out, after all,” he thought. “Pentland may solve the riddle for me this afternoon.”

The Warrington team, crazy with anger at the disgrace of the score, waited in sullen silence for the goal to be kicked, and then marched out to position. There was nothing

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debonair in the bearing of the men now. With the score six to nothing against them, they were going to lose no time in evening matters up. The Pentland full-back was given no opportunity to repeat his performance. Fisher got him on the twenty-five yard line, with a tackle which could be heard over the field. Warrington's defense was impregnable, and Pentland kicked.

"Now! Hard at 'em," exhorted Macklin, and the team threw itself into the play, every man assured that the touch-down was a fluke and that all they had to do was to sweep Pentland off its feet. But in this they were mistaken. The Pentland line did not yield an inch, and on a forward pass a Pentland end bobbed up serenely and took the ball out of Fox's very grasp.

"We are going to get some strong medicine," said Bob as he watched this fiasco. "The men are up in the air."

The first period ended with no further score, both teams fighting fruitlessly near the center of the field. Half time saw no change, but Bob thought he had discovered the weak

link, which prevented the plays from succeeding.

“ Could you tell what’s wrong ? ” asked Macklin wearily during the intermission.

“ I think so, ” returned the coach. “ Of course it is largely due to stage-fright. That quick score has taken the men’s confidence. But the reason so many of our plays fail to come off is Stone ! ”

“ Stone ? ” exclaimed Macklin. “ Why, he has been doing yeoman work on the defense and made a couple of nice runs. ”

“ That may be so, ” yielded Bob. “ But he is not playing up. He is saving himself. His work looks pretty on the defense, because he is making everything sure. He doesn’t go after the runner unless it is an easy chance. In other words, he is playing for his average. And he has missed three forward passes. ”

“ Missed ? That was Baker’s fault. He passed the ball wild each time. ”

“ Not so wild as Stone made it appear. He wouldn’t try for anything that wasn’t in his arms. We missed a good chance to score on one of the times. ”

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"Are you sure?"

"Sure!" affirmed Bob. "There could be no mistake about it."

"What are you going to do?"

"Warn him; play him this next quarter, and if he doesn't improve put in Ames," said Bob with determination.

Stone was a little scared at the way Bob hauled him over the coals, and began the third quarter with determination. But after missing a hard tackle, he insensibly went back to his old style of spectacular gallery play, which drew applause from the grand stand with great regularity, but did not help his team much.

Bob's lips tightened as he saw Stone deliberately shirk a head-on tackle for the second time.

He turned on his heel, and beckoned to the row of substitutes.

"Ames!" he called.

Trembling with eagerness, Ames jumped from his seat, pulling off his sweater as he ran.

"Go in and take Stone's place," directed Bob, laying a hand on his shoulder. "And

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remember I am sending you in to help win the game, not to show how good a player you are. Try for everything you have the slightest chance of reaching. Be reckless—but cautious. In short, use your head. Tell Baker if he does not get a score in this quarter to use 71 and 81 in the last if he gets the chance. Now go ! ”

Ames reported to the referee and touched Stone on the back.

“ Walters has sent me in to take your place,” he said diffidently.

“ What ! ” growled Stone angrily, and looked daggers at his substitute. “ All right ! ” he said ungraciously and stalked off the field.

“ Look at that,” exclaimed Newton, jogging Livingston’s arm excitedly. “ Bob has sent Ames in in Stone’s place.”

He was not alone in noticing the substitution and expressions of surprise and indignation could be heard all through the students’ section, mingled with the blast of cheering as Stone walked toward the gymnasium.

This demonstration in Stone’s favor was lost on Bob. He had no eyes but for the team, no

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time to waste on questions of policy. He was fighting for a score, and he meant to have it, if his judgment told him to play a dozen substitutes.

For a time the change seemed to obtain no results. The seconds remaining in the third period were passing quickly, and Warrington was still unable to make any serious attack on the Pentland goal line. The men were still demoralized. The play was lifeless; it lacked the dash and snap by which alone a score could be made.

Bob watched Ames sharply, and was pleased to see him take his place in the machinery of the back field without causing the slightest hitch. The period ended before it was possible to judge if the substitution was a successful move.

During the short intermission Bob came in for much criticism. The crowd, relieved temporarily from the task of watching the game, was able to turn its entire attention on the coach, and took full advantage of the opportunity.

“Why in the world do you suppose

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Walters took Stone out?” queried Alden to the men around him.

“So he’ll give his pet a chance to make the score, I suppose,” said another student. “Mark my words, Walters is still working to give Ames the place.”

“I think you are undoubtedly right, but I question if Macklin will stand for that sort of work.”

“But there is an honest difference of opinion on the ability of the two men, isn’t there? I don’t think Bob Walters would let any outside influence tamper with the team. It would not be like him.”

“No, he never has shown qualities of that kind. But you never can tell. He may have his price, after all.”

“Well, let’s watch Ames this quarter and see how good he is. Walters may honestly think he is the better man.”

“And again he may not,” said Alden with disbelief.

To the group in the grand stand, Ames’ play did not seem on a par with that of his predecessor. The fact that Warrington for

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the first time in the game was able to make consistent gains, that the team seemed to be a unit instead of eleven parts, was put down to their recovery from the earlier panic and no credit was given to the new blood.

Bob, however, anxiously pacing the side lines, knew better. He saw what the others missed—that Ames was always in position, the first to start at the snap of the ball, the first in place again after the ball was downed. His cool, methodical bearing was a steady-ing influence on the other backs, and Bob realized at last that he “knew” Ames was the better man for the place. As he came to this determination he threw a glance over his shoulder at the grand stand as though measuring strength with the body of students, who he was sure would bitterly resent such a move.

“The team will be loyal, at least,” he thought. “Stone has not a very strong following, and can hardly make trouble. Still, I wish I did not have to do it,” and Bob heaved a long sigh at the thought of the difficulties into which his sense of duty was

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carrying him. The condition of affairs on the field was encouraging. Warrington, imbued with this new spirit, had pushed the ball, by taking advantage of quick openings, to the twenty-yard line. The students were howling for a touch-down.

Bob, who had followed along the side lines, saw Baker throw him a hesitating glance and then, as though reassured, give his signal: “ 4—26—81—9.”

“ That’s right,” thought Bob, and with nervous intensity he watched the fate of his play.

Fletcher dropped into position. As the ball was passed, the Pentland forwards charged through to block if possible the supposed try at goal. When they were almost on him, Fletcher tucked the ball under his arm and scooted for the end. Ames took a step, pretended to slip, and straightened up in time to take the pass. So far the trick had worked perfectly. One man dove for him, but Ames side-stepped and hurled the ball, with exact aim, to Fisher who, unguarded by an opponent, stepped coolly across the line with the ball. The play was a success!

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The stands were changed on the instant from silence to uproar, and the Warrington cheer drowned all other sounds with its volume.

That score was the turning point of the game. There were not many minutes left to play, but Baker threw his men against Pentland with a rapidity and variety of attack which carried all before it, and before the referee's whistle sent the crowd streaming homeward the score-keeper had added another six points to Warrington's score.

"That 81 play worked to the queen's taste, didn't it, Bob?" said Macklin, as, breathing heavily, he escaped from the crowd and joined Walters on the steps of the gymnasium.

"Couldn't have been better," agreed Bob with satisfaction. "I am sorry we had to use it, though."

"I wouldn't worry about that," said Macklin. "It's good enough to work even if they expect it. Especially since we have those variations."

"By the way, Mack," said Bob later when

“ 4-26-81-9 ”

they were left to themselves, “ I have made up my mind about Ames and Stone.”

Macklin looked at him inquiringly. “ Ames played a nice game,” he admitted.

“ Didn’t he ? ” affirmed Bob eagerly. “ He steadied the team in a way Stone has never done. There is no longer any doubt in my mind. Ames should have the position.”

Macklin frowned. “ Well,” he said, “ of course if you are sure he is the better —— ”

“ I know he is the better man,” affirmed Bob gravely.

“ All right, then,” agreed Macklin, after a pause. “ What you say goes ! ”

CHAPTER XX

TRELAWNEY'S CAR

"RAT-A-TAT-TAT! Anybody at home?"

"Come in!"

The door opened and the big frame of Trelawney appeared on the threshold.

"All asleep in here?"

"Not quite," returned Bob somnolently from the divan where he was stretched out.

"Where did you spring from?"

"Nowhere. Just dropped in to see if you three wanted to take a ride. I have my car outside."

"That's a good thought!" said Bob sitting up with alacrity. "How about it, you two?"

"I'm game," said Newton. "I was just beginning to think that it was a shame to waste an afternoon like this in sleeping."

"Will you come, Liv?" asked Trelawney lowering his bulk slowly into a chair.

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"Yes, indeed. Glad of the chance."

"All right. Get a wiggle on you. The afternoons are none too long nowadays."

The four friends, well gloved and coated, for the November air was chill, bundled themselves into Trelawney's waiting car and struck for the country. Through the city streets Trelawney proceeded with reasonable slowness, but once the outlying houses had given way to broad fields and shaded pastures he drove at a pace which quickly forced the others to hold on.

"Steady there!" cautioned Newton from the back seat as a bump caused him to rise gracefully from his seat and renew contact with a thud. "These back seats aren't as easy riding as the front ones."

"This isn't fast," laughed Trelawney scornfully. "I haven't begun to let her out yet."

"I don't mind the speed, you old galoot," retorted Newton, "but for goodness sakes 'ware bumps, or I'll send you my dentist bill. You've shaken the upper row loose."

"All right, I'll be careful."

For the next hour the car droned across

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country, up-hill and down, the sharp November air driving the last remnant of weariness from Bob's brain.

Trelawney was choosing the less traveled roads and, twisting and turning, now on the crest of a barren hill, now in a wooded valley, soon had Bob's sense of direction hopelessly mixed. Not that he wanted to know where he was. He was only too thankful to escape from the well-known surroundings, which at present meant so much worry, work and misrepresentation.

"Close shave you people had with Pentland," volunteered Trelawney as he eased the car up a hill. "I was afraid you were not going to win out."

"Where were you, Trel? I looked for you on the side lines."

"Up in the grand stand," said Trelawney, with a slight hesitancy which Bob either failed to notice, or put it down to the preoccupation of the driver.

"I am rather glad now that Pentland gave us such a fight," remarked Bob after a moment following out the train of thought started

TRELAWNEY'S CAR

by his companion's original remark. "It cleared up some doubts in my mind."

"Such as?"

"Stone versus Ames."

"Oh," said Trelawney, his interest caught immediately. "And what have you decided?"

"Ames gets it, I think."

"Really! I am glad you were able to decide that way."

"It was a close thing—a mighty hard point to decide. But as I see it, Ames saved the day for us yesterday."

"It seemed to me that the team steadied down when he went in," said Trelawney critically. "But I couldn't be sure from where I was sitting."

"By the way," asked Bob inquisitively, "that reminds me. What were you doing in the grand stand?"

Trelawney bit his lip covertly.

"I went with a party," he answered briefly.

"Who? Was it pleasant?"

"Yes, very. Mr. Ames gave it."

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"Was Miss Ames along?" asked Bob with an exaggeratedly innocent air.

"Oh, yes," said Trelawney, trying to appear unconcerned.

"I thought it would take a girl to keep you off the side lines, Trel," said Bob teasingly. "Is she pretty?"

"Yes, I think so. Haven't you met her?"

"No, never happened to have the chance."

"How would you like to this afternoon?"

"First-rate. Why?"

"I thought we might stop in and see them. Mr. Ames lives about two miles from here."

"Oh, I see!" remarked Bob.

"See what, smarty?" retorted Trelawney, with some asperity.

"That all roads lead to home!" was Bob's somewhat cryptic and distorted reply.

"Go to the deuce." Trelawney reddened. "Would you care to stop in?"

It was on the tip of Bob's tongue to give a careless assent when he bethought himself of possible complications in view of his overnight decision.

TRELAWNEY'S CAR

"I'd like to, Trel," he said slowly. "But I don't think I had better."

"Why not, pray?"

"Because of all this talk about Ames. Particularly now that I have decided to give him the place."

"Oh, nonsense." Trelawney cut him short. "No one would think twice about it." He turned to the others. "Asleep back there?" he asked. "How about stopping in at the Ames place?"

"Fine!" agreed Newton who was in the comfortable humor of being willing to accept any proposition presented to him.

"Livingston would like it, I know," continued Trelawney. "There is a friend of his staying in the house."

"See here," said Bob indignantly, "this looks like a put up job. I don't see where Newton and I come in at all."

"Oh, you can talk to Mr. Ames," retorted Trelawney, and considering their destination settled, opened his throttle and shot the car forward.

Down a long hill, up another and the big

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colonial house, half-way up a gentle slope, set in a grove of wide branching trees, showed ahead. As Trelawney cleverly took the turn into the drive and they climbed the long slope, Bob saw many figures dotted over the lawn, and his feeling of impending catastrophe deepened. However, he was in for it now, and trusting to his innocent motives, he determined to banish his fears.

The car load was greeted enthusiastically. Bob, noticing the friendly warmth with which the daughter of the house treated Trelawney, and the charm of her personality, wondered no more that Trelawney was willing to forego his privileged seat on the side lines.

Bob had, however, no cause to complain at his own greeting, for Miss Ames quickly made it evident that nothing was too good for the man who carried her brother's destiny in his hands. Gregory himself, who was at home, showed that it was only his sense of the fitness of things that kept him from monopolizing his guest.

"Here is the friend I was talking about a

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while back," said Trelawney as a girlish figure came through a porch window.

"Miss Everitt, I declare," exclaimed Bob stepping forward eagerly. "I haven't seen you for months."

"Not since you fell in the river, I think," the girl answered laughing.

"That's not fair!" Bob protested shaking his head at her. "You mustn't rake up old stories!"

"No, indeed, that's not safe," chimed in Trelawney. "Bob has a good memory and a tongue in his head, you know. He might tell tales on you!" Trelawney cocked an eye at Livingston.

Miss Everitt blushed.

"Nonsense!" she said. "My record is clear." But she nevertheless changed the subject with, "Well, what are we going to do?"

"How about a joy ride?" suggested Trelawney eagerly. "My car will hold the crowd."

Miss Everitt looked doubtfully at the sun.

"Have we time?"

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"Loads of it. The afternoon is young yet. Come on, everybody."

"I won't come," said Gregory, as they piled in. "There isn't room."

"Sure there is," said Trelawney as he started his engine. "Miss Ames, get in front, will you?"

"May I sit at your feet?" asked Bob.

"Yes, that's right. You four get in behind. Sit tight!"

With much laughter and screaming the party got under way.

Bob, leaning back against the dashboard, looked up at Miss Ames. "Wonderful place you have here."

"We think so. It's the real country, too, even though we are so near the city."

"Near the city?" said Bob in surprise. "Why, you are a long way out."

"No, indeed. It's only eight miles to father's office."

"Trel must have come a very roundabout way, then, and twisted me all up. I thought it was much further."

"How is the team doing? Are you satisfied with it?"

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"Oh, don't!" pleaded Bob. "Don't make me talk shop. You don't know how tired I get of it. I hear nothing else all the week."

"But I am very much interested on account of Gregory," she replied smiling. "And it is not every day I have a chance to get news from the fountainhead."

"Don't force him, Miss Ames," cautioned Trelawney, letting the car run easily along the broad road, and joining in the conversation. "You will find the fountain running dry very quickly if you do."

"Oh, but I must hear," persisted the girl. "Are we going to beat Essex?"

"Time will tell," said Bob.

Miss Ames made a face at him. "You're very mean," she said. "I don't think you are even polite."

Bob, who was laughing, sobered instantly. "It's impossible to say. We have a good chance, and if the luck breaks our way we should win quite handily."

"Essex hasn't done much this year," objected Miss Ames.

"No, but they will be on edge for us. Any

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team that has a Clark and a Ford on it is always dangerous. You don't forget them last year, do you?"

"Clark was quarter-back, wasn't he?" hazarded Miss Ames.

"Good for you!" This from Trelawney.

"I follow all the games!" she retorted.

"Ford was the half-back who gave us so much trouble," continued Bob.

"Yes, I remember."

"And they are both playing this year, and are better than ever, from all accounts. So you see Warrington will have its hands full."

"If Gregory makes the team," the girl began impulsively, and then seeing a change in Bob's face, stopped in embarrassment.

"Don't bribe the coach with those smiles," said Trelawney. "It isn't fair."

"Pay more attention to your driving, Trelawney," called Newton from the rear. "You nearly had us in a ditch that time. Miss Ames, you are a dangerous side partner."

Chaffing each other thus, they sped along. From time to time, the long drawn wail of the

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horn drowned their merriment, as Trelawney sent his warning ahead to some wagon that was taking more than its share of the road, or group of pedestrians who were enjoying the crisp air.

"Why does every one you pass always look daggers at you?" asked Miss Everitt of no one in particular.

"Possibly because they object to being well dusted," said Livingston.

"We can't help the dust."

"No. But human nature isn't always logical."

"Whom are you waving to, Mr. Walters? And why do you look so cross about it?" asked Miss Ames, as she saw an expression of annoyance cross Bob's face.

"I'm not cross," protested Bob. "You misread me that time. Who do you think that was we passed?" he added, trying to appear casual.

"Who?"

"Foster and Stone. Warrington's left guard and right half-back."

"Stone! Why, he is Gregory's rival."

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Bob nodded.

"Oh, why didn't you tell me? I should have liked a good look at him."

"I didn't see them till we had passed."

"What are they doing out here?"

"Oh, most of the men get out in the country on Sunday if they can. We like them to do it. It freshens them up. They are not far from a station now, are they?"

"No; there is one just round the next bend."

"They are evidently making for that," commented Bob. He looked at the sun. "I think perhaps I had better be getting back too. Head for home, Trel!"

"Oh, but you are going to stay for supper," protested Miss Ames. "Of course you are. All of you." She included the occupants of the tonneau in the sweep of her hand. "We expect you."

"Well ——" said Bob doubtfully, but she would brook no denial and the coach, feeling that the fat was in the fire anyway, decided to enjoy himself while he could. Nevertheless, he more than once relapsed into silence as

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his thoughts turned to Foster and Stone trudging along in the dust of the automobile.

As the big red touring car disappeared in a cloud of dust over the crest of the next rise, Stone turned to Foster with raised eyebrows.

"There go my chances of playing against Essex," he said dryly.

"What do you mean?" asked his companion who was still brushing the dust from his clothes.

"Didn't you see who was in it?"

"I saw Bob Walters. I couldn't make out the others."

"You must be blind. Trelawney was driving."

"Well?"

"And the girl in front was Miss Ames!"

"The deuce you say."

"And in the rear was Gregory himself."

"I didn't know Bob knew them."

"Neither did I. But he evidently does."

"Probably spending the day out at the Ames place."

"Exactly. With the whole Ames family bringing influence to bear what chance have

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I? Especially with the new laboratory hanging on his decision."

"I don't believe the Amesese would mention the matter, Jack."

"Of course not. But there is such a thing as the silent treatment, you know. Old man Ames is an adept at it, they say. He's a rich man."

"What's that got to do with silent treatment?"

"In the financial world, the modern system is not to take your neighbor's money brutally. You just will him to give it to you. That's high finance." Stone spoke with some bitterness.

"Well," said Foster, "it will be a confounded outrage if your suspicions turn out correct. But I can't believe it. I think you'll find yourself back in the line-up to-morrow."

"Supposing I am not?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, in a case of rank favoritism like this, what ought I to do? Just let myself be put off?"

Foster took some time in replying.

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"Perhaps you don't think it would be an injustice to me," said Stone in an injured tone.

"Yes, indeed I do," Foster hastened to say.

"Do the other men feel that way too?"

"I think so."

"Well, then, don't you think I would have a right to protest? Or at least have my friends protest for me?"

"Yes. It isn't a square deal." Foster was becoming worked up.

"Will you stand by me if I make a kick?"

"Yes, indeed. But on the other hand, Jack, a fuss now will ruin our chances against Essex."

"It won't be good for us, of course. And I won't make a kick if the rest of the team is satisfied. But if the men are going to be disgruntled, I think our better chance is to settle the matter at once. Bob may yield gracefully."

"That's true," said Foster reflectively. "All right, I'll stand by you."

Stone smiled to himself, well pleased at having secured a defection in the ranks.

"There is our train," he said suddenly. "We'll have to run for it."

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Stone was busy with his thoughts on the way to town, and did not pursue the subject further. He thought he had said enough in that direction. But he made a point of dropping into Alden's rooms after supper.

"Hello, where have you been all day?" Alden asked.

"Foster and I took a walk in the country."

"See anything of interest?"

"Saw Bob Walters out automobiling," answered Stone casually.

"Whom was he with?"

"It was Trelawney's car, I think. I noticed Miss Ames and Gregory among others. They had been spending the day at the Ames place."

Stone said this with an utter lack of expression that made his underlying meaning stand out all the plainer.

Alden gave an expressive whistle.

"I should have thought Walters had more tact, in view of the criticism he has been getting," he said scornfully. "I wonder what the college will think of that!"

CHAPTER XXI

THE SOREHEADS

ALDEN was so much interested in knowing what the college would think of it that he lost no time the next morning in finding out.

The more volatile men, and it was chiefly among those that Alden pursued his search for knowledge, received the news with loud expressions of disgust, and demands for an investigation. The general concensus of opinion was that it looked suspicious, and that if Stone was replaced by Ames it could be due only to the purse strings of Mr. Ames and his insidious hospitality. However, the men would wait and see before taking action.

"Give him the benefit of the doubt," said one. "He may have decided to play Stone after all. We will know this afternoon for certain."

The grand stand was unusually full of students, even for an afternoon in the last week of the season, and the spirit of unrest

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which emanated from the student body penetrated even the single minded absorption of the team. This was partly due to Foster, who had quietly canvassed the squad to learn if possible the preference of the men for the two rivals. Most of them seemed to think it was none of their business.

"I may have my personal opinion on the subject," said Dolan bluntly, "but until Bob or Frank asks for it, I can't see that I have any right to express it. I'll accept for a side-partner any man they select. I have perfect faith in them both. Don't go 'round stirring up trouble for nothing, this late in the season. We all want to beat Essex, and I'm willing to let Bob say which of us shall do it."

All the men were neither so loyal or level-headed, however, and Foster found several who expressed their opinion strongly in favor of Stone.

Macklin looked round as he came on the field that afternoon, and turned to Bob.

"Your decision is going to make trouble, Bob," he said. "The college looks dissatisfied."

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"I'm sorry, Mack," Bob said, looking up at the stands. "I am firmly convinced that Ames is the better man for this team. You know I think that, don't you, Mack?" he added anxiously. "You know I wouldn't let anything else bias my judgment?"

Macklin's answer was instant and warm.

"Bob," he said, "I haven't played on the same team with you all these years not to know you would be incapable of such a thing. If I didn't have that opinion of you, I wouldn't back you up now. Nevertheless we are going to have trouble!"

"I am sorry to get you in for it, anyway. Well, let's get to work."

When the 'Varsity lined up for practice and the college saw Ames step into position at half-back, it groaned. The groans were not delivered in concert, but there could be no mistaking their presence. Bob flushed, but paid no further attention.

As the afternoon drew on, the opposition seemed to become better organized, for with malicious regularity the groans burst forth whenever Ames took the ball.

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This hostile spirit naturally affected Ames' playing, and the practice became exceedingly ragged. Once Macklin in a white rage determined to order the stand cleared and the gates closed, but Bob interfered.

"Don't do it, Mack," he advised earnestly. "It will only make matters worse. We can't down this fable by force. We must find some other way."

Macklin grumbled, but saw the force of the opinion, and acquiesced.

Bob drove the team through its regular routine, and cut the practice short by not so much as a minute, although his ears were red with suppressed passion when he finally sent the squad to the gymnasium.

"Rather trying? Eh, Mack?" he said grimly.

The next afternoon the word had gone the rounds of the college that there was trouble in the team, and students, who usually were oblivious to its existence, turned out in force to watch results.

The ringleaders had invented a new form of disapproval. When Bob announced the

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line-up for the day and Ames took the contested position, the whole body of students rose from its seats and filed solemnly out of the grounds. Many joined in the movement who had no conception of what it meant, but left their seats because the others did. To the team, however, ignorant of this fact, it was even a more appalling expression of dissatisfaction than the groans of the previous day.

Bob gritted his teeth and said nothing. Macklin gritted his and ordered the gates closed.

"We'll have secret practice," he announced.

The college awoke the next morning to find itself decorated with large placards bearing the announcement

*Mass Meeting
To-Night
Big Quad.
8 O'clock
Everybody turn out.*

The notices attracted great attention. All the morning groups of men could be seen standing in front of them debating their meaning.

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For no one seemed to know who was responsible or just what the meeting was for.

"Now, I wonder," mused Kidder, as he read the poster, "just what is back of this. Do any of you know?" he asked the group around him.

"I have my suspicions," volunteered one with a snicker.

"I'd rather deal in certainties," retorted Kidder, half under his breath. "And I think I'll find out."

He pushed his way out of the crowd and could be seen the remainder of the morning, stopping a man here, whispering to another there. By lunch time the frown he had been wearing was replaced by a smile, and then he vanished from the scene.

By eight o'clock that evening the Quadrangle was filled with a good-sized crowd, which was constantly augmented, as men in knots of two and three drifted in from supper.

The crowd at first seemed aimless. It drifted here and there in eddies. No one seemed to know just why he was there and no one appeared to take charge of the meeting.

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Bob and Macklin stood in a window overlooking the scene. They were both plainly worried.

"This is a regular revolution!" said Bob. "Look out for your scalp."

"What in the world are they going to do?" said Macklin frankly puzzled.

"I suppose they will denounce me, and insist on Stone's reinstatement. There he goes now!" Bob exclaimed.

There was an outburst of cheering from the fringe of the crowd, which followed Stone and constantly increased in volume.

"He takes this mark of approval very modestly," commented Bob, sarcastically. "You would never suppose he had fomented this disturbance himself."

"Do you think he has?"

"Undoubtedly he has had something to do with it. How much, I can't say."

"Can you see who that is with him?"

"Foster, I think," returned Bob, peering into the semi-gloom.

"Foster? Is he disaffected too? By Jove, I'll fire any man who disputes my authority,"

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exclaimed Macklin angrily. "And I'll go down and tell 'em so!"

"Steady, Mack." Bob caught him by the arm as he started for the stairs. "Authority won't go to-night. They won't stand for it. We must use diplomacy and trust to fate."

Cries of "Stone! Stone!" rose from the crowd, and as he mounted the steps leading into the small quadrangle, directly below where Walters was standing, the applause was deafening.

"Hello, some one is going to make a speech," said Macklin. "I'm going down."

"Come on then, but keep your temper. A victory over Essex depends upon how we manage this crisis to-night."

They were immediately recognized as they reached the steps and a volley of groans greeted them.

"Give us Stone!" the crowd yelled. "No favoritism here!"

"Down with old money-bags!"

"Stone! Stone!"

Foster and Stone at the further end of the

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steps were basking in the popular approval. Alden was waiting for a lull in the din to address the crowd.

Suddenly a figure detached itself from a group in the corner and sprang up the steps. It was Benson. He turned and faced the crowd.

His unexpected appearance stilled the cries and he seized the chance.

"I am ashamed of you!" he shouted. "Where is your college spirit? Is this what you call standing by the team ——"

"Good old Benson," murmured Bob. "He's true blue. But he won't accomplish anything."

Already the crowd was again getting out of hand. Benson could no longer make himself heard. Stone's name once more filled the air. Bob decided that he would face the mob and learn its pleasure. He turned to confer with Macklin. When he turned back every face was looking in the other direction.

The mournful strains of the Dead March could be faintly heard. Then from under the great archway of the tower came a two-

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wheeled cart drawn by a diminutive pony and flanked on either side by musicians.

Standing erect in the cart was a strange figure. A sputtering torch affixed to the dashboard threw an intermittent glare on a wizened face, white hair and a dilapidated frock coat. In his hand the man carried a pole to which was fastened a placard printed in large letters.

Bob stared in amazement at the strange procession. For a moment he was at a loss to understand it. Then as the cart approached he was able to read the sign.

*Dr. Kidder's
Komplete Kure
for
Soreheads.*

A ripple of amusement started near the arch, increased in volume as it spread and broke in a wave of laughter at Bob's feet.

"Tommy Kidder!" he exclaimed with thankfulness. "Mack! The day is saved."

Kidder halted his donkey at the foot of the steps, and Bob saw that the cart was filled

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with small objects that looked like bottles. Two woebegone individuals, with large bandages around their heads, trailed the tail-board.

The crowd, all its animosity for the time being forgotten, crowded around, eager to be amused.

Kidder mounted to the seat.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have here a marvelous cure for the prevailing disease of the day. Soreheads!" A laugh greeted this as the shot went home. "Will any one buy? What, no buyers! A penny the bottle. Step lively, gents. My supply is limited. Let me illustrate. James! Kindly step forward. You see this well developed case. Very painful. Makes the patient look very foolish. He doesn't think it can be cured—but, gentlemen, that is because he lacks my medicine. Presto! one gulp, and the sorehead disappears."

Kidder whipped off the bandage and James retired.

"Who will have one? Thank you kindly. And you? And you?" Man after man entering into the spirit of the occasion stepped

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up and received a bottle. The original purpose of the meeting seemed to be forgotten. Alden chafed in a corner.

"Now," continued Kidder, "there is one thing further. I warn you purchasers that the disease is very catching. It spreads rapidly. To protect yourselves fully help me sell every one present my complete, marvelous cure. What is it?" Kidder dropped his bantering tone and his voice rang out in deep earnestness. "What is it? It is called Confidence! Take a big dose of it to-night and we will yet beat Essex!" He lifted a bottle to his mouth and blew a long blast. His example was immediately followed, and the blare of trumpets nearly blew Kidder from his seat.

He held up his hand. "Have you all got confidence?" he called.

"Yes! Yea, boy!"

"Then give it to Captain Macklin and the team!"

A burst of applause greeted the words.

"Hurrah for Macklin!"

"Three cheers for Walters!"

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“The team! The team!”

“Bully for Tommy,” said Bob, who felt a load taken off his shoulders at the genuineness of the cheer. “He has saved the day!”

He looked 'round the crowd. Several men waved at him. Across the steps he caught Stone's eye. The half-back lifted a horn to his lips and blew a strong blast, smiling at Bob the while.

“He's a good loser,” was Bob's inward comment. The thought made him search the corners for Foster. The guard was slinking off into the darkness.

Bob's lip curled. “I knew he was yellow somewhere. I hope he doesn't show it on Saturday!” He turned toward his room. Tommy had met the crisis successfully. The revolt was crushed.

After the turmoil of the week, Bob hailed the arrival of Saturday with relief, even though it brought with it the final test of his season's work.

He spent the morning with the men, helping to keep their minds off the game during

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the long hours which dragged so wearisomely toward midday.

"It looks as though a storm was brewing," announced Fletcher as for the tenth time he walked to the window and studied the weather.

"For goodness sake, Fletch, get a new line of conversation," said Dolan half irritably. "You have worn that one threadbare."

Fletcher laughed. "Sorry, Bill," he returned. "But I am not just talking. I'm really interested. If you had to do the kicking you would be too."

The day did look unpromising. A leaden canopy of clouds completely eclipsed the sun. There was little wind, but the thermometer showed forty degrees, and the air was damp.

As they crossed the street to luncheon, Bob sniffed the air. "Snow!" he prophesied. "We will be lucky if it holds off until after the game."

The men picked at their food. No one had any appetite, and conversation lagged. No one made any pretense of being sorry when McLane moved to the door.

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"Better be getting down," he said quietly.

The men straggled down the street in twos and threes. Here and there a knot of students wished them luck, or a street gamin ran alongside in shameless hero-worship.

The first detachment of the immense crowd that would later fill the stands to overflowing had begun to filter through the gates. The team hurried into its quarters. The men were in no mood for idle admiration at this time.

Bob looked long at the sky. "It is going to snow," he said with conviction, as he watched the flags flapping lazily against their poles.

He turned abruptly and entered the dressing-room.

"Jimmy!" he called.

"Yes, cap."

"How many extra jerseys have you on hand?"

Jimmy scratched his head. "Mighty few," he said. "Not more'n three or four."

"Any trousers?"

"Not a one!"

"We'll have to get some, then."

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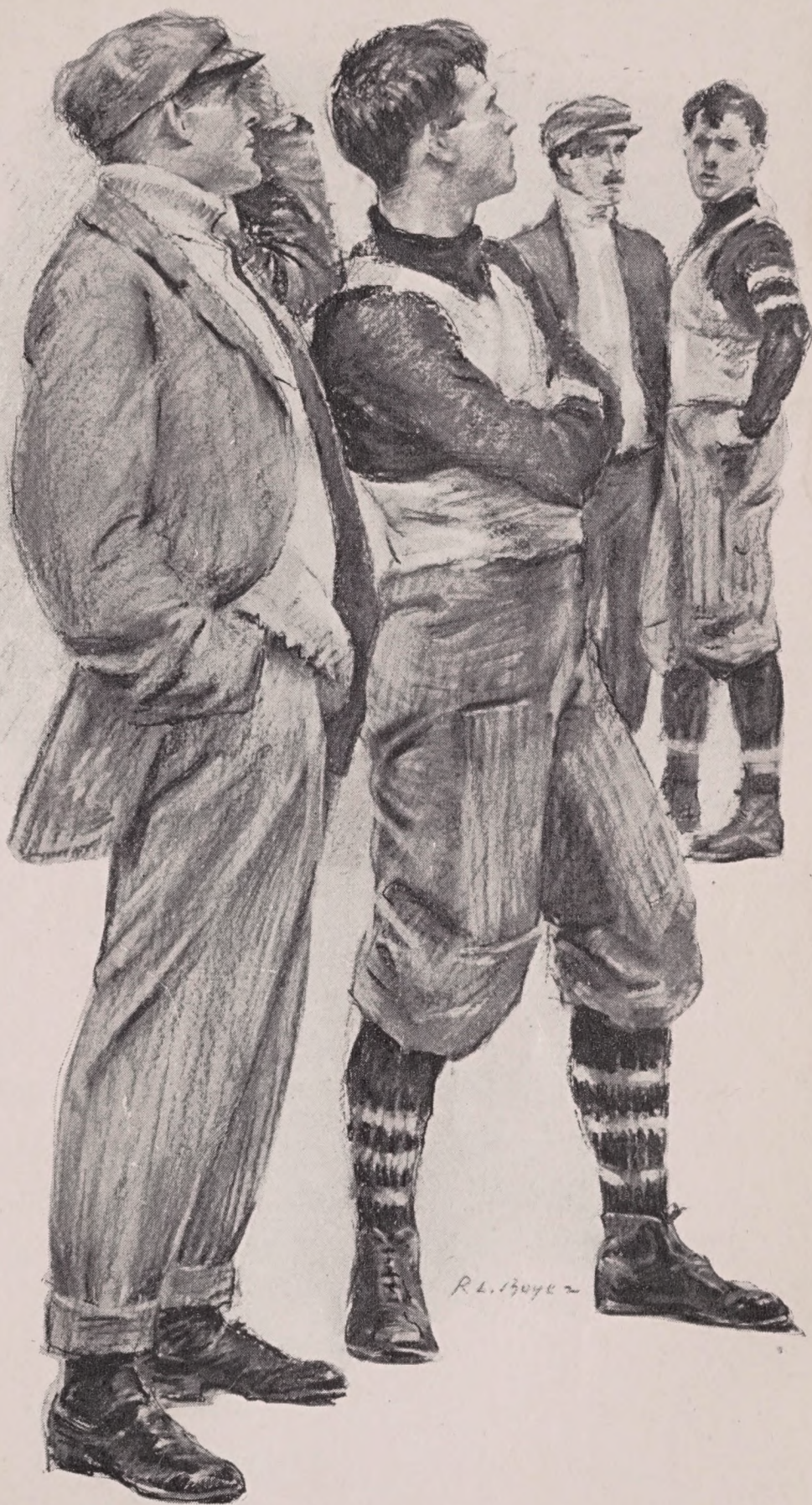
Bob turned to the telephone.

"Main 482. Is this Baird & Co.? This is Robert Walters talking. Warrington coach. Yes. Send me out complete suits for the team. What? All right." Bob gave the names of the players to be provided for. "You have their sizes," he added. "Hurry it up now. I want them out inside of an hour." Bob hung up and resumed his watch of the weather.

The stands were filling rapidly. In acknowledgment of the threatening conditions every one was well wrapped up and extra rugs hung from every masculine arm. A swollen stream of figures passed him constantly, threatening at any moment to flow over the frail iron fence which bordered the playing field.

Bob looked at his watch. "Time to get out," he thought.

The squad of black-sweatered figures seemed unusually somber in the murky light, as Captain Macklin led the way into the maelstrom of cheering. Even the orange of Essex seemed dingy.



HE LOOKED ANXIOUSLY AT
THE FLAGS

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The referee greeted the two captains and spun the fateful coin.

"Heads!" called Clark.

"Tails it is," said the referee bending over the coin. "What will you take, Macklin?"

"Wait a minute." Macklin ran over toward the side lines to where Bob was standing.

"I won the toss," he said hurriedly. "Shall we take the wind?"

Bob hesitated. If his forebodings were correct it would be an advantage to have the storm at their backs during the last quarter. He looked anxiously at the flags.

"Look, Mack!" he said. The wind was rising. There could be no doubt of it. The flags were flying free. "Take the wind!" said Bob.

The crowd waited for the commencement of hostilities with impatience. It was cold on the stands. Already flakes of snow, mixed with drops of rain, were falling. The wind began to come in great gusts.

"Pretty chilly!" said Trelawney to his neighbor, Miss Ames.

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"Oh, no. I'm warm. It's so exciting!" she said eagerly.

"Glad Greg made the team?" he asked quizzically.

"Glad?" She threw a world of reproach into her voice. "It's the greatest thing that ever happened to the Ames family!"

"Going to be a mean afternoon to sit out here," volunteered Livingston, who with Miss Everitt made up their immediate party. Mr. Ames had been accommodated with a seat on the side lines.

"They're off!" yelled Trelawney.

The ball under the impetus of a powerful kick sailed far into Warrington territory. Fletcher running forward caught it and instantly in obedience to orders drove it down the field. The wind seized upon it, and carrying it onward for many yards dropped it finally into Clark's arms at his forty-yard line.

"First blood for Warrington!" chanted Trelawney at this profitable exchange of kicks. "That's the game with this wind."

Baker evidently thought so, for when Essex was forced to kick, which happened speedily,

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he called upon Fletcher at once. Essex lost another ten yards in the exchange. This proceeding was repeated three times, Essex not able and Warrington not caring to advance the ball in any other way.

At last, on a short kick by the Essex full-back, the wearers of the white and black secured the ball in their opponent's territory.

Baker instantly changed his attack.

He began by slipping Ames through a quick opening on tackle and followed it by a wide end run, Fletcher taking the ball. This did not succeed, but it served to open the Essex line, and Dolan found sufficient space between guard and center to squeeze through for a first down.

"Pretty fast attack we are showing," commented Trelawney.

"It's hard to score, though, under these new rules," said Livingston.

"When did you set up to be an expert, Mr. Livingston?" asked Miss Ames.

"When you room with the coach it would be hard not to pick up some knowledge. Bob often airs his views to me."

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Warrington forced the ball by a varied attack to Essex's twenty-yard line, only to lose it on a forward pass.

A kick put Essex out of danger, and the long march to the goal had to be begun all over again.

But no time was left in which to score, even though the wind had now grown into a gale, and a punt would carry almost the length of the field.

Time was called before Baker could get his machine started again.

"I don't like the look of things," said Trelawney, as the whistle blew. "We will have our hands full staving them off for the next two periods."

CHAPTER XXII

THE TEST

THE sleet which had come with the rising wind toward the end of the period was quickly converting the field into a morass. The players stood and shivered in the driving gale, waiting for the short intermission to pass.

“Whoever invented these rules must have overlooked the fact that we occasionally have bad weather in November,” said Macklin sarcastically as he hopped up and down trying to keep warm. “I’m frozen.”

When the game once more started, Warrington found playing in the teeth of the gale to be no child’s play. The sleet had thoroughly soaked the ground and now, changing to snow quickly, covered the field with half an inch of slush. The ball became wet and heavy. It was difficult to handle, and Baker found it impossible to make a forward pass with any certainty.

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On the first interchange of punts Warrington was driven back to its ten-yard line, and found it impossible in the face of the wind to force the ball out of that dangerous territory.

"Did you ever see such a day?" growled Trelawney, as, huddled up close to the rest of the party, he tried to keep the snow from drifting down his neck. "Keeping anywhere near dry?" he asked Miss Ames.

"No, not exactly. But it can't be helped," she answered good-naturedly. "Oh, do you think they are going to score?"

"Don't see how they can help doing it," said Trelawney gloomily. "They have the wind for two periods straight, and it is an impossibility to punt against this wind. We can't score. That is certain. Our only hope is in keeping their score down until we get a chance at the wind."

The odds were heavily in favor of Essex. Secure in the knowledge that Warrington could not possibly threaten his goal, Clark tried every trick at his command, hoping for a misplay by Warrington, which would give Essex a score. Each time the play failed.

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Warrington would try two rushes and then kick.

Baker used his head and used only those plays which were sure, not trying to gain much ground, for that was impossible, but bending all his energies toward making the plays safe. "Hold 'em, Warrington," was his constant cry.

The ball in this way hovered between the fifteen and five-yard lines. Once, on a forward pass, Ford had a clear field, but slipped and fell in the slime. The grand stand heaved a sigh of relief.

"Close shave, that!" said Trelawney who was neglecting Miss Ames outrageously, seldom taking his eyes off the field. She, however, did not notice his neglect. Her eyes were following every movement her brother made.

"Jove, but it must be cold down there," said Livingston, as time was being taken out for some unfortunate who had had his wind knocked out.

The condition of the players was indeed pitiable. Every play meant a descent into icy slush, and then a cold wait in the piercing

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wind for the next signal. Hardly a man but was shivering and blue with the cold.

Flesh and blood could not stand the strain. Some one made a mistake, and the Essex team, profiting by it, swept down to the very goal line.

"First down, and six inches to gain," remarked Trelawney. "It looks like a score."

Desperate, kneeling in the mud, their faces drawn with pain, the Warrington line awaited the attack. It came swiftly. Macklin, with a hoarse yell, threw himself forward, grabbed all the legs he could see, and bore with all his strength against the oncoming mass. With relief he heard the referee call the ball down, and picking himself up saw the oval still six inches from the coveted line.

"That's the way, fellows," he said triumphantly. "They can't score on us. Keep at them!"

Clark tried a double pass—there was no room for one forward—but Fisher, ready for just such a maneuver, followed the ball unerringly and threw the runner for a loss.

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“Good boy, Fisher!” said Macklin approvingly, picking him up, and from the stands came the long Warrington cheer, with Fisher’s name tacked on the end, rising even above the gale.

Essex lined up for the supreme test, confident of their power to send the ball across the line for the coveted touch-down. Warrington, desperate, crouched low, determined to ward off the attack. Clark selected a play on tackle. Macklin saw the runner coming and plunged to meet him. His foot slipped, his opponent hurled him aside and through the hole thus made, Ford came like a whirlwind. Just as he pierced the line, Ames met him. Met him with a low lunge, which stopped the orange striped figure in his tracks, and then, reinforced by the other backs, hurled him to the ground. The referee crawled under the mass of men feeling for the ball.

There was a moment of breathless suspense on field and stand.

Suddenly Trelawney, who was peering through the thick flying flakes, saw Bob Walters hug himself.

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"We've saved it," he cried exultantly to Miss Ames. "We held them for downs!"

"Isn't that fine?"

"Bully work, Liv, eh?"

"Hello, time's up!" said Livingston. "I had not realized the period was so nearly over."

The two teams trotted off the field as best they could. Every joint was stiff with the cold, and their suits, soaked through and through, but added to their misery. The Warrington team was in the worst plight, and now Bob's foresightedness was rewarded.

He ordered the men to strip, and then he, the rubbers and all whom he could press into service, worked over the half-frozen men to restore the circulation. Most of them were shaking so that they had to be helped to shed their clothes. Bob wasted no ceremony. Where a lace remained obdurate, or a jersey refused to come off, he used a knife freely, and soon had the men ready to don the fresh clothes.

"Here, Ames, drink some of this hot soup."

The half-back tried to put it to his lips, but

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his hands were shaking so that he was unable to.

"Let me feed you," said McLane, and held the cup, while Ames gulped the hot soup down.

"That's good!" he said through his chattering teeth.

The big stove was red hot with the fire Jimmy had built, but even its warmth could not overcome the chill which had penetrated to the very bones of the players.

Foster stood close to it, the white hot plates within six inches of his bare back. But his big frame shook like an aspen leaf.

"For goodness sakes, Foster," said Bob, laying his hand on the flesh, "you're cooking! Don't stand so near."

"I'm c-c-cold," said the guard. "I don't feel the heat. It has no bite."

"Here, Jimmy!" called Bob. "Get to work on Foster."

Jimmy pinched and pummeled Foster without mercy, but still he shivered.

"I don't see how I can stand another period of that!" he said. "I'm all in."

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"Sure you can," said Jimmy encouragingly. "Just wait till I get this dry suit on you and you'll feel fine."

To the spectators the intermission was all too long.

"It's getting colder every minute," growled Trelawney, as he held a rug up against the wind and pulled it close around Miss Ames.

"My feet are lumps of ice," his companion volunteered, drumming her heels against the floor. "I wish I could stand up."

"Don't," warned Trelawney in alarm. "We would get soaked in a minute. Do you want to go home?"

"No, indeed. Not for the world."

"You're a good sport," said Trelawney admiringly, as he watched many other couples, unable longer to withstand the weather, leaving the stand. "Most girls would want to leave."

"Most girls haven't a brother playing," she retorted. "But I do wish they would begin again."

Warrington took up the burden of the

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unequal fight once more, with praiseworthy courage.

Fletcher kicked off. He put all his strength into the swing of his leg, but the ball, starting bravely, was met with the full force of the gale and traveled a bare twenty yards.

Essex kicked at once, and the old fight recommenced, Warrington fighting doggedly to last out the period, and Essex forcing, forcing the play intent on scoring.

The field of play was now covered with a white blanket, except in the immediate vicinity of the teams. Underneath the snow was an inch of muddy slush, and when a man fell, he spouted water like a geyser.

"Hold 'em, Foster," grunted Baker, as an Essex back came sliding through center.

"I can't keep my feet," protested the guard.
"This is nice weather to make a man play in."

In many respects the game was developing into a farce. Seldom was a tackler needed to bring a runner down. A change of direction was usually sufficient to send his heels up in the air. But always the attack crept closer to the Warrington goal.

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Fumbles were frequent on both sides, and Warrington benefited thereby. Anything to give them possession of the ball. But three times in succession they took the ball away from Essex on the five-yard line on downs, each time to have Fletcher's punt carry but a meager ten yards. The strain was terrific.

Foster found it difficult to get to his feet after each play, and became more and more inclined to fall before he was touched.

"Why don't they call the game?" he muttered. "This is asking too much of a man. The game isn't worth this suffering!"

"Brace up, Joe," urged Owens at his side. "Don't make us do all the work!"

"I'm tired!" said Foster through his teeth.

"So are the rest of us," snapped Owens. "Play up."

"I won't!" retorted Foster peevishly. "I want a rest." And he made only a half-hearted effort to stop the next play that came his way.

Owens was playing desperately, but unassisted could not hold the mass of weight that

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came at him. It was Essex's ball—five yards nearer the goal.

“Play up, you quitter!” gasped Owens as he found his feet. “I don't care if you are tired. Be a man!”

Bob, wrapped in a blanket, stalked up and down the side lines. He too was shivering with the cold, but in his intense interest did not feel it.

“Foster is giving out,” he thought. “They'll have a touch-down through him soon. He is not working.”

He hesitated, however, to put Benson in his place. The extra weight was worth a great deal on such a day and such a field, even though it was not backed by spirit.

While he hesitated Warrington secured the ball on her two-yard line on downs. This had happened so often that Bob did not show the elation he would have earlier in the game. There is a limit to the response of emotion.

Fletcher stepped back to punt. The pass was low. He stooped for the ball. The instant's delay was his undoing. The Essex forwards were on him. He heard the ball

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strike with a squashy thud against the breast of an opponent and was then buried in the mud by the rush of men. He climbed slowly to his feet, sick at heart. Essex had scored!

Clark spent much time in sighting the ball for a goal, and sent it over the cross-bar cleanly, despite its slippery condition.

Essex had made six points, and the discouraged Warrington team was still facing the blast.

"Just wait till the next period," growled Macklin at his opponent when the ball was once more threatening Warrington's goal. "When we get the wind we'll smother you."

"We are going to smother you now!" was the retort. "Your line is easy!"

"We've got 'em on the run," yelled Clark. "They are putting in substitutes."

Benson came running out. Bob had hesitated no longer.

"Go in," he said. "And play!"

Foster walked to the side lines.

"You had better run in to the gym," advised Bob.

"You bet I will. I have had quite enough

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of this. It's fierce," and he walked slowly off through the storm.

Bob gazed after him, scornfully. "Yellow!" he said, and turned his attention to the game.

"If we can only hold them now, we will tie and perhaps win," he said hopefully. "Time must be nearly up."

"Into 'em hard, Benson," said Owens as the substitute took Foster's place.

"I'll do my best!" The guard hurled himself into the play with vim. His opponent, noticing the difference in weight, treated the substitute at first with little respect, but quickly found out his mistake.

Not only was Benson fresh, but he was filled with the spirit of victory, and though chilled from his long wait on the side lines, played with the abandon of a colt.

"Good work!" muttered Owens after one play in which Benson out-generated his opponent and stopped the runner for a loss. "It's a relief to be playing next a live man for a change!"

"Your brother is doing well," said Livingston, leaning across to Miss Ames.

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"Isn't he fine?" she said proudly.

"He has been the backbone of the secondary defense," asserted Trelawney. "They haven't made anything on his side. He is grit through and through. Not like some of the others."

"Whom do you mean?"

Trelawney mentioned Foster.

"That mountain of flesh!" he said. "He gave out."

"Oh!"

This exclamation was caused by Ford slipping round the end apparently bent on a touch-down.

Ames came quickly though gingerly across, reached him in time, and both went down.

"Ames! Ames!" yelled the stand with what force it could.

"Bully for Gregory!" exclaimed Trelawney. "Saved us that time, for sure."

"Lucky, too," said Livingston. "Time is up!"

During the short intermission the sole topic of conversation after the weather was whether Warrington could tie the score in the fifteen minutes remaining. Or was the team too ex-

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hausted from its heroic defense to take full advantage of the wind now that it was in its favor?

The moment Warrington secured the ball, Fletcher lifted a long punt down the field.

"Jove, that is a relief," he said as he trotted down after the ball. "That wind is great when it's with you."

Bob on the side lines was gnawed with anxiety. He paced up and down, unmindful of the storm; his blanket had slipped off unnoticed; he gave but the curtest answers to any one who approached him; his mind was busy with the play before him, and over and over in his brain turned the ceaseless question, "Has my judgment been good? Have I given those plucky fellows out there the best chance to win? Had I done this, had I done that, would not the team have been stronger?"

Warrington, though now for the first time safely ensconced in her opponent's territory, found scoring no easy problem.

Baker tried the quick cross-buck which he had used so successfully all through the season, but now his backs could not keep

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their feet. The slightest touch sent them sprawling, and to attempt a side step or any of the quick swerves which were so necessary to such a play meant immediate downfall. It was like trying to walk on ice. Cleats did no good. They but acted as rollers to increase the treacherousness of the footing.

“3—32—81—9.”

Baker had decided to resort to forward passes and trust to making one lucky shot.

Fletcher started for the end and turned in his tracks, prepared to hurl the ball back to Ames.

“Kerplunk—splash!”

His feet slipped from under him, and he sat down heavily.

“Second down—twelve to gain,” chanted the referee, spitting out a mouthful of mud that Fletcher’s sudden descent had hurled there.

“62—5—71—6.” Baker had mapped out his campaign, and was not to be discouraged.

Fletcher raced for right end. As he gained position he tried to stop and make the pass to Fox, who had come quartering across the field.

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No use! He slid wildly on and collided with the Essex end. Both went down in a heap.

“Third down, fourteen to gain.”

“Take it slower, Fletch,” whispered Baker as they lined up. “Same signal.”

With the ball on his opponent's ten-yard line, Baker had no alternative. Drop kicking was impossible.

“29—7—71—3.”

Bob nodded his approval as he heard the numbers snapped out.

Fletcher profited by his former experience, and ran carefully toward the end. He handled the slimy ball with the greatest care, and at the proper moment hurled it into space.

Fox, floundering in the mud, somehow arrived in time to reach it before it touched the ground. He steadied himself a moment to make sure he had a firm grip on the slippery oval, found no opponent within touching distance, and fell across the line for a touchdown.

Bob heaved a sigh of relief, which was intensified when Fletcher kicked the goal. “Tied—at least!” he said. “Now, to win!”

CHAPTER XXIII

“IT’S ALL RIGHT ”

ESSEX kicked off wearily. The men were tired from their exertions, and the continued drive of sleet in their faces was beginning to tell on their mentality. The snap was missing in their movements.

Urged on by Clark, however, they contested each yard of the snow-covered field; each yard, which turning black under foot in the struggle for possession, was immediately covered with a pall of white, as Warrington pressed on toward the goal.

To reach the ten-yard line was easy. To get further was a herculean feat. Baker tried every play in his list, but lost the ball on downs or fumbles with discouraging regularity. It was, he thought, only a question of time when a lucky chance must give Warrington a score, but there was grave danger of

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hearing the referee’s whistle before that chance came.

Ames’ body was numb. From his feet to his eyebrows, his circulation seemed to have stopped. Every movement was agony, yet to stand still was to deliver himself to an attack of shivers which pierced to the marrow. His body was numb, but his brain was alert.

He missed no chance, overlooked no possibility of advancing the ball or checking Essex, and more than once, Macklin turned a face gray with suffering toward him, to whisper a “Well played, Greg!” through swollen lips.

It was Essex’s ball. Dolan, in trying a quick plunge, had let the ball slip and the ever-watchful Clark secured it. Two plays, and Essex had to kick. The ball was close to the left side line.

As the full-back dropped into position Ames moved back to his.

“If he kicks straight he may send it out of bounds,” he thought. “If he avoids that by kicking across the field, the wind will curve

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it." He made up his mind. "I'll take a chance," he said, and ran to his right till he was opposite the end.

Bob was at a loss to understand the maneuver, and barely refrained from calling angrily to the half-back to get in position.

The ball was kicked. Fearful of going out of bounds, the Essex full-back drove the pig-skin diagonally across the field.

Ames' diagnosis proved true. The ball sailed true for perhaps ten yards. Then as its impetus lessened the wind caught it, deflected it, and in an ever-increasing curve drove it back and back till it fell in Ames' arms near his right end. No one was near him. Twenty yards away was the goal line, and slipping, sliding at every step, causing the hearts of the thousands that watched to jump painfully, he carried the ball across, only to lose his footing as he did so and lunge heavily on his shoulder. What did it matter? The game was won!

"There," said Trelawney turning to the hero's sister, "you have a right to be proud of that lad. He's a corker!"

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"But that was just luck," protested Miss Ames, though she was on her feet cheering madly.

"No," said Trelawney with conviction. "He used his head. He was waiting for that ball!"

Down on the field twenty-two feeble men were giving each other a cheer.

Their faces, covered with layers of gray mud, looked drawn and aged. They shook in their walk like old men, and McLane with anxious feelings hurried them as best he could to the dressing-rooms.

"It will be a wonder if some don't get pneumonia from this," he grumbled. "The game should never have been played."

"We won, anyway!" said Bob joyfully. "Macklin, you old graybeard, I'm proud of you."

Macklin smiled feebly. "I never want to go through that again!" he said. "It was a nightmare."

Bob helped him to the gymnasium.

"You deserve credit too, Bob. And lots of it. Ames won the game for us! Not many

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coaches would have insisted on playing him in the face of such opposition."

"Yes, Mack, but I knew!"

"That's why you deserve credit. You did know!"

Macklin sank wearily on a bench.

"Help me to undress, Bob," he said weakly.
"I'm all in!"

The college was so cold when it left the grand stand that remarks on the game were few and far between. Most of the men made straight for club-house or room and there ensconced in armchairs, with feet toasting on the hearth in the cheeriness of a wood-fire, the comments on the game and season began to thaw out.

"I was certainly proud of old Warrington to-day!" volunteered Tommy Kidder from the depths of his chair. "The team stood the gaff surprisingly well."

"Rather! I didn't see a man weaken, except perhaps Foster. He seemed to mind the weather more than most."

"Didn't have the backbone!"

"Why did Walters play him, then?"

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"It wasn't entirely Bob's fault," said Kidder. "I think he favored Benson, but Macklin stood out for the other."

"Benson certainly put up a fine game when he got in."

"Didn't he, though!" chorused the others appreciatively. "Bucked up the whole line."

"We'd have done better if he had started the game."

"If Walters preferred Benson he should have played him," said Alden, joining in the conversation from the edge of the circle.

"I don't think the college can have any criticism to make of Bob to-night!" asserted Kidder warmly. "He stuck to his guns in the Stone matter, and he was right."

"How do we know?" challenged Alden. "Stone might have done a lot better than Ames did."

"If any one here could imagine a man playing a steadier game than Greg Ames did this afternoon there might be something in what you say, Alden," retorted Kidder. "But I don't think there is. How about it, fellows?" He appealed to the crowd for support.

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"You are right there, Tommy," said one. "Ames was as steady as a clock, and that counted to-day. Brilliancy could never have stood that gale. Walters' choice was best. The college knows that to-night if it didn't before. I'm only sorry we failed him last week. We owe him an apology."

"I'm with you there," said Kidder. "How about it?"

"What do you mean?"

"Let's go up and give him a cheer."

"That's the ticket! Get the crowd."

"I'll make the rounds of the clubs," said Kidder eagerly. "You rout out the dormitories. We'll meet at the tower." He snatched his overcoat and was off.

By the trainer's advice, advice which fitted well into their own inclinations, the men who had fought so valiantly gave up all idea of holding the customary dinner that evening in honor of breaking training.

"No rich food, boys!" McLane had said. "Just a light supper and then to bed. You'll all be ill otherwise. Save your fun for another night."

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Macklin, deathly weary, still cold to his very marrow, acquiesced in this decision thankfully, freeing him as it did from the necessity of sitting through a long dinner.

“Not for me!” he said to Bob as he reached his room. “I’m going to sit here and drink hot milk. That may get me warm once more.”

“Sounds good to me,” said Bob. “I’m pretty cold myself. How about some milk toast?”

“Fine!”

The necessary ingredients were quickly secured and while Macklin toasted the bread before the fire, Bob got out the chafing-dish and made ready to heat the milk.

“That toast smells good,” said Bob sniffing the air. “Hurry up. The milk’s almost ready.”

“Jove, that was a game,” mumbled Macklin reminiscently a few moments later, his mouth full of toast. “I’m glad to have played in it, but I’m mighty glad it’s over!”

“It must have been fierce,” agreed Bob sympathetically.

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"No joke about that. My, this tastes good. I never felt so cold in my life."

"You looked like an old man after the game."

"Did I? Well, I felt like it. By the way, Bob, you were dead right about Greg. He played a corking game."

"Didn't he, though?"

"He saved us lots of times! I'm mighty glad you held out for him."

"I wish I had held out for Benson too," said Bob reflectively.

"Oh, I don't know. Foster didn't do half badly."

"He quit!" said Bob tersely.

"You're too hard on him, Bob. He played well till he became exhausted."

"Till he thought he was exhausted," corrected Bob.

"Isn't that almost the same thing? Aren't you splitting hairs?"

"I don't think I am. There's a big difference, to my way of thinking. I don't mean Foster is out and out yellow. He isn't—not by a long shot. But he has never learned to

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punish himself. He quits when he gets good and tired."

"Don't we all?"

"You didn't! You were doing twice the work Foster did, but I'll bet you never admitted to yourself you were tired. It was something to fight against. With Foster it's something to look forward to as an excuse for stopping. You remember that afternoon in the woods, don't you?"

"Yes," said Macklin reflectively, "I begin to see what you mean. I never had any fear of Foster going stale from overwork. Some men you have to restrain."

"Exactly. Benson is of the latter type. I took Foster out because he was shirking. He was afraid of hurting himself."

"Benson certainly strengthened the line when he came in."

"Yes. By his spirit. Every one cheered up."

"I guess you're right, Bob," said Macklin as he sipped a glass of hot milk. "However, we won, anyway. So it's all right."

Bob sighed.

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"What's the matter?"

"Even this victory hasn't taken away the bad taste of that mass-meeting. Tommy saved us that night, but I can't feel that the sentiment of the college really changed. They may still believe the old rumor, and I hate to leave Warrington with that sort of an impression."

"Nonsense!" said Macklin heartily. "The college is back of you to a man."

Bob smiled a little drearily. "I wish I could think so," he said. "But that is something I'll probably never know."

He stared at the fire moodily in silence.

Through the closed window came the sound of many voices breaking into the stillness of the room. A flickering light played on the frosted panes.

"Hello!" said Macklin. "What's up?"

He strode over to the window and threw it open.

"Come here, Bob," he said.

The coach walked slowly over and looked out.

The Quadrangle was packed with men, show-

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ing black against the falling snow. Torches wavered here and there, keeping time to the music of the college hymn, and lighting the faces of the hundreds who stared up at the window.

As they caught sight of Bob, a mighty cheer burst forth, rocketing from one end of the crowd to the other.

“Walters! Walters! Warrington!”

Bob choked and turned away, unable to watch unmoved the wildly gesticulating crowd beneath him, whose every face showed confidence and affection.

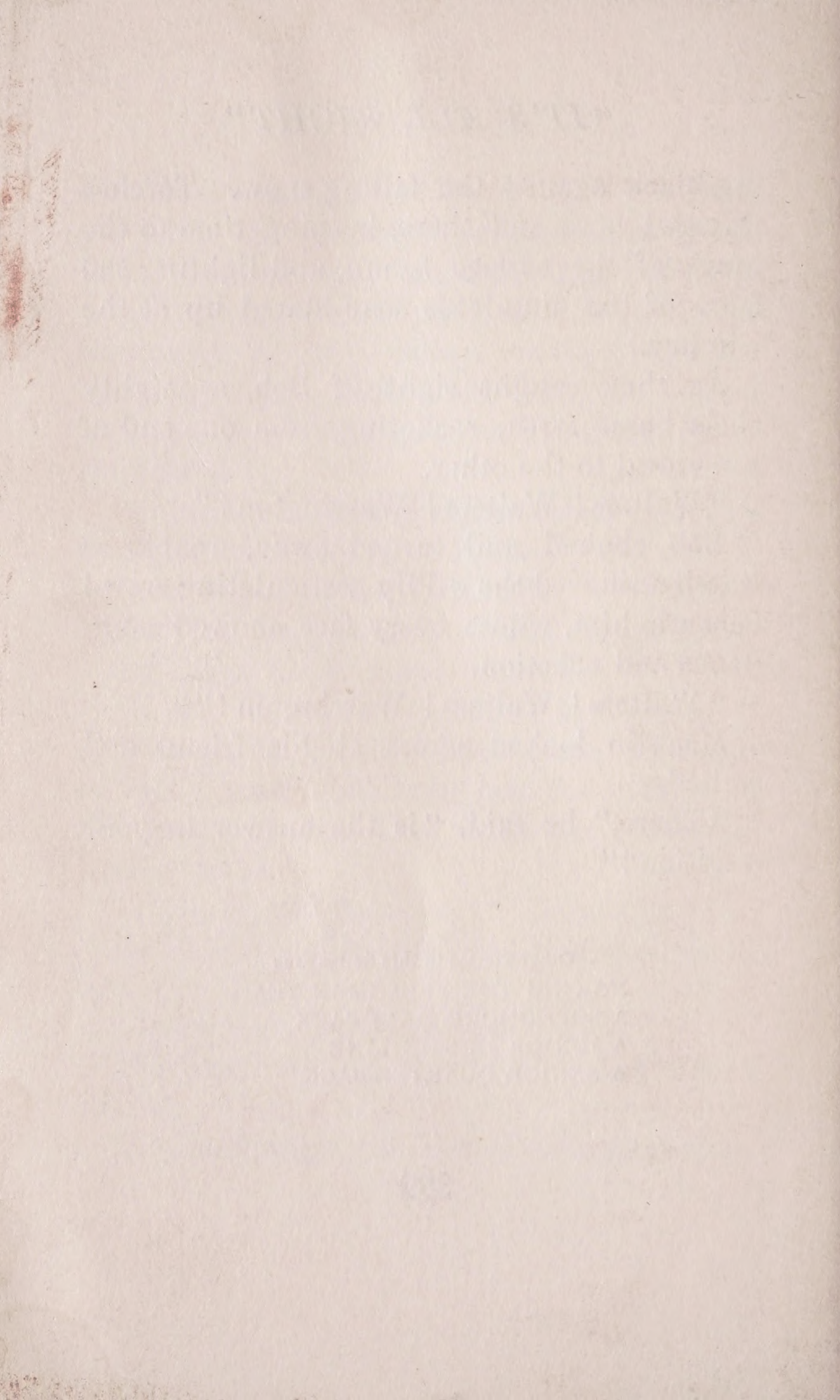
“Walters! Walters! Warrington!”

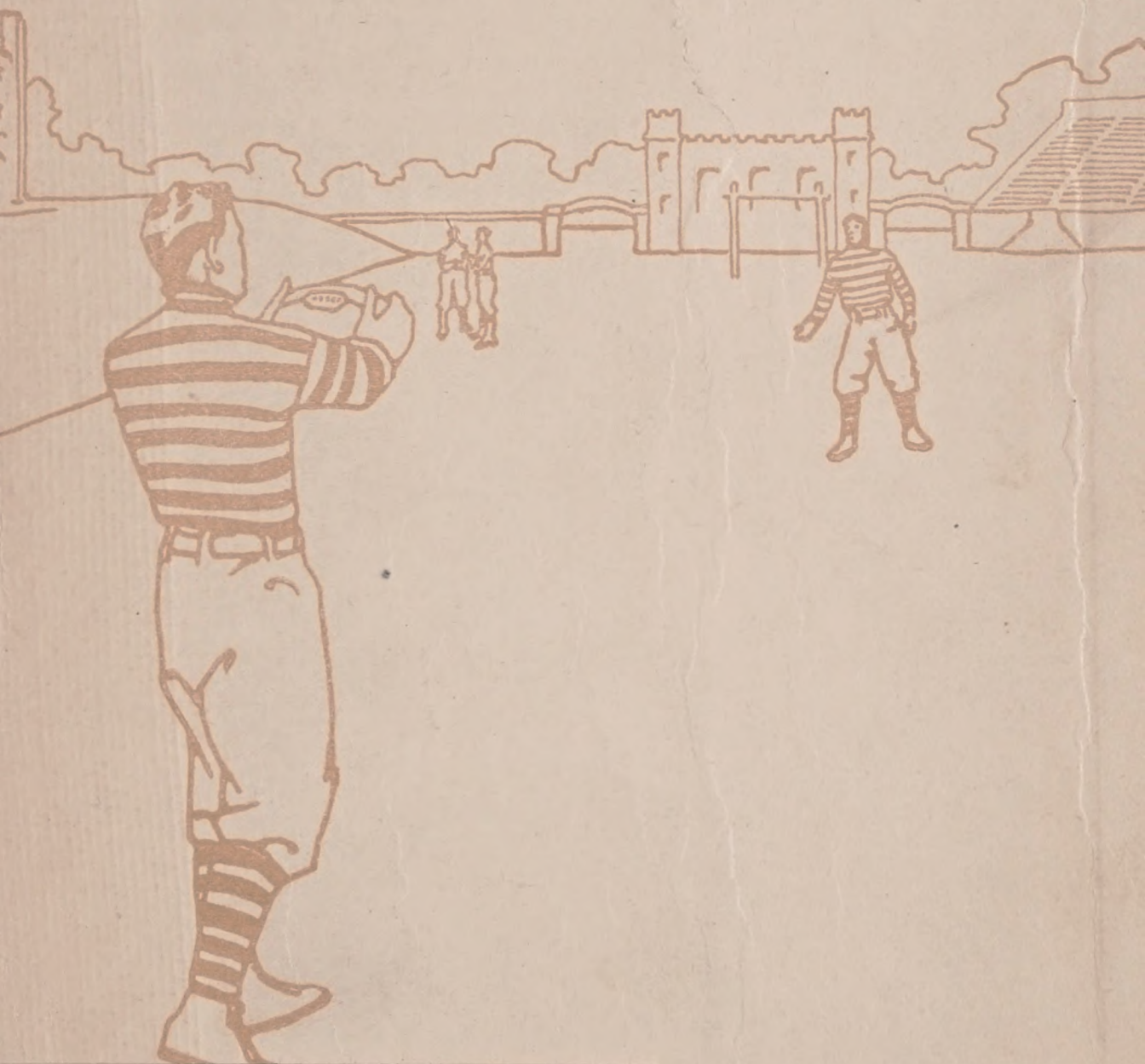
Macklin looked across at his friend and smiled.

“There,” he said, “is the answer to your question!”

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